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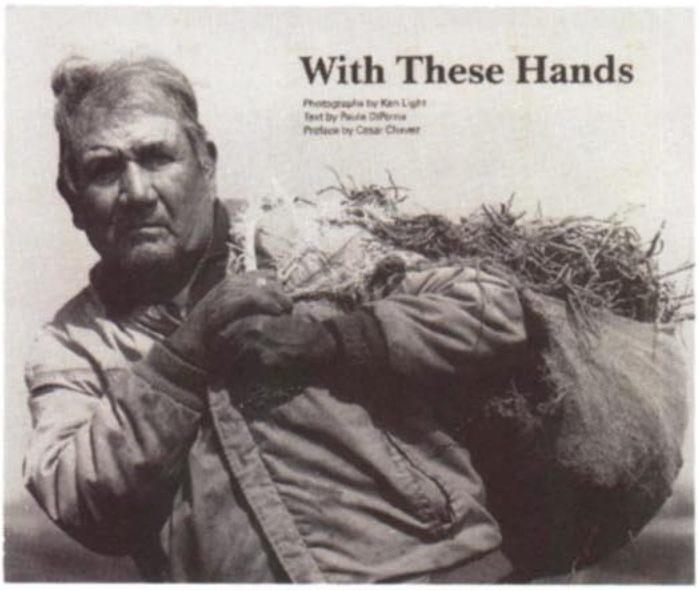

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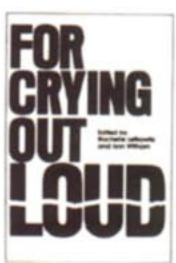

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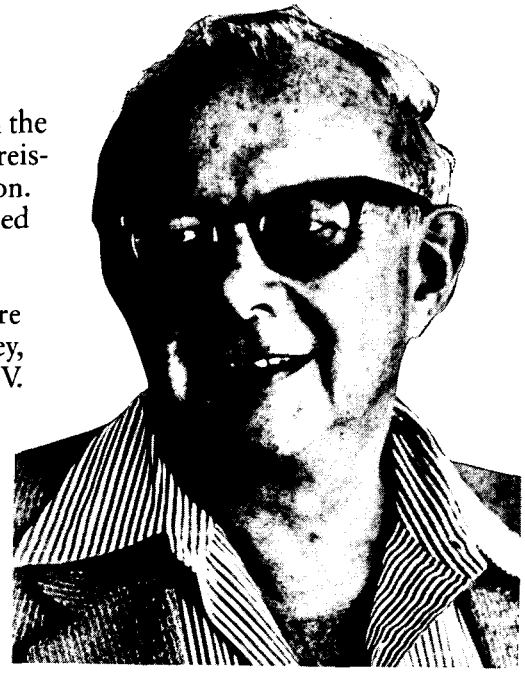

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H. Brand

Not Much Reform in "Tax Reform"

Class politics is of the essence of taxation.
—T.S. Adams[1]

The "tax reform" legislation—which at this writing still awaits final approval by Congress and the president—has been acclaimed by conservatives and liberals alike. It would presumably distribute the tax burden more fairly, exempt most low-income earners or radically reduce their federal taxes, and shift some of the burden from families to business. Other reasons for the acclaim are that it would broaden the tax base, i.e., make the definition of taxable income more inclusive by eliminating various tax benefits; and that it would "simplify" the tax system. I will show that this acclaim has been less than thoughtful on the part of those who have traditionally called for a more equitable tax structure.

IN APPRAISING THE TAX LEGISLATION, three issues need to be examined. *First*, taxes pay for the resources needed by society at large. Does the tax reform provide sufficient means to do so? The answer is no. *Second*, the tax burden should be distributed equitably. In passing their versions of tax reform, the Senate and the House virtually abandoned the principle of progressivity that at least in theory has underlain the American tax structure since the income tax was introduced seventy-three years ago. Is the tax reform informed by some other principle ensuring equitability? Again, no. And *third*, the broadening of the tax base is fine if its object is to generate more revenue, especially revenue to meet social needs and reduce the federal debt with its enormous interest charges. But that is not its object. Its object is to help make possible a steep reduction in tax rates.

Reduction of Resources

THIS BRINGS US TO THE PURPOSES underlying the tax reform. The White House has conditioned its acceptance of the tax reform upon its being "revenue-neutral"; Congress has agreed. The slated rate cuts are to be offset by scaling back of depreciation write-offs, abolition of investment tax credits, many tax shelters, and a number of exclusions and exemptions. Such broadening of the tax base has merit. But as noted, it lacks any fund-raising objective. Its announced aim is to make the tax system more "neutral" with respect to economic decisions. These decisions are to be less influenced than hitherto—if influenced at all—by tax considerations. But this is a debatable objective. Many tax preferences have been abusive; others have corresponded to valid public policy. Abolition of worthy tax preferences calls for their being replaced by direct spending measures. But no such action is intended. The November 1984 Treasury Report on tax reform stated that "to the extent that direct spending replaces tax subsidies, tax rates could not be reduced as much as proposed."[2] What's more, the tax reform is far from neutral in economic impact. In reducing personal income tax rates, it shifts economic decisions largely in the direction of personal consumption, and away from social investment.

Another stated purpose of the tax reform is to remove, as far as politic, the tax disincentives that supposedly face "the entrepreneur." In the November 1984 Treasury Report, then Secretary of the Treasury Regan wrote, "Rate reductions of the magnitude we propose will open wide the doors of opportunity to those who are willing to work, to save and invest, and to innovate."[3] Ideologically more revealing was President Reagan's address of May 29, 1985, promoting tax reform, in which he said:

> The greatest innovations for new jobs, new technologies, and economic vigor today come from a small but growing circle of heroes—the small business people, American Entrepreneurs. . . . Lowering personal tax rates will give a hefty boost to the nearly 15

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million . . . individual proprietorships and partnerships.[4]

The president neglected to mention that business failure rates under his administration have been the *highest* since the 1930s; new business formations have been below levels of previous cyclical expansions; and the farmer, once regarded as the epitome of individualism, is undergoing his worst crisis in more than fifty years. Generally, the argument that high marginal rates act as disincentives is specious since it brushes away the complexity of motivations and the offsetting influences that work upon them. The president may believe in the myths he propagates. Not by coincidence, however, since these myths rationalize a tax reform that "opens wide the door" only for the highest income groups, and will have the very probable, if unacknowledged, result of reducing revenue.

Motivated by class and ideological interests, the Reagan administration has steadily aimed at depriving the public nondefense sector of needed resources (as well as compelling privatization of public services). Its success in terms of tax policy has been considerable. For example, the effect on federal tax receipts in 1983 from the revenue provisions of the Economic Recovery Act of 1981, was a decline of $92.5 billion from what these receipts would have otherwise amounted to; for 1984, the loss has been estimated by the Treasury Department at $136.5 billion, and for 1985, at 170.3 billion.

Losses from the accelerated capital cost recovery system (not including the investment tax credit—both are to be repealed under the tax reform) ran to an estimated $18.2 billion, $26.1 billion, and $35.7 billion in the three years.[5] True, the giveaways enacted in 1981 were partly scaled back under the so-called Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982. But this act was not the "backlash against Reaganomics" it has been called by some of the more knowledgeable critics of President Reagan's tax policies.[6] It did not undo the income tax cuts instituted in 1981; and the scaling back of depreciation writeoffs did not spell much of a reduction from the revenue losses noted above. Nor did it stem the rise in the federal deficit, which has continued at high levels throughout the current prosperity phase of the business cycle—and which manifests the corruption of the public finance system through Reaganomics.

THE PREFERENCES GRANTED BUSINESS by the 1981 tax act failed to spur capital investment. They also relieved some of the largest corporations from paying federal taxes altogether: this is surely a primary reason why these preferences are virtually being canceled under the tax reform (although some concessions to business seem likely in the final version). The accelerated cost recovery system, together with the investment tax credit (enacted in 1964), led to *a decline in corporation income tax receipts as a percent of total revenues from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 8.5 percent in 1984*—yet corporate investment did not improve in relation to the national product. On the contrary, it decreased to an average 8.6 percent of the GNP over the 1980-84 span, from 9 percent for 1965-69, when the share of corporation income tax receipts was 21 percent; and from 8.7 percent for 1975-79, when that share was 14.4 percent.[7]

Citizens for Tax Justice found that, "Of the 250 large, profitable companies we surveyed, more than half enjoyed at least one year between 1981 and 1983 in which they either paid zero . . . Federal income taxes or actually received cash rebates from the Treasury." But "without [the accelerated

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capital cost recovery system and investment tax credit], General Electric, for example, would have paid close to $1 billion in taxes in 1983, instead of receiving a refund."[8]

THE ELIMINATION OF THESE BUSINESS tax preferences was already proposed by the Treasury Report of November 1984. However, both this and subsequent reports, and the tax reform legislation itself, would partially offset the "losses" to business resulting from this elimination by sharp cuts in the corporation income tax rate. But even under the House tax bill, which would cut the corporate income tax rate less than the Senate version, the net cost to business would merely restore the share of tax receipts from corporations in total revenue to 1980 levels.[9] The privileged position of capital would thus be affected little by the tax reform. For the tax on capital gains—which helps mostly persons with incomes of $200,000 or more, to whom there has hitherto accrued 72 percent in value of the partial exclusion of capital gains from taxable income—will at most be equal to the top rate of the three steeply lowered personal income tax rates under the tax reform.[10]

The revenue neutrality of the tax reform has been repeatedly questioned. It is hard indeed to see how the cuts in personal income taxes (which in recent years have accounted for 45 percent of federal revenue) can be offset by the elimination of some business tax preferences. The tax reform is bound to be a revenue loser.[11]

Unfair Distribution

HOW ABOUT THE DISTRIBUTIONAL ASPECTS of the tax reform? Let us look at the long-term shift of the tax burden from capital to labor (which the reform may slow), the relief it offers to low-income workers and the poor; and its loss of progressivity.

The effective rates of federal, state, and local taxes on income from capital (e.g., profits, interest, rents, capital gains) declined by nearly 50 percent between 1966 and 1985. Comparable rates on income from labor (wages, salaries, and the portion of business income regarded as deriving from work) rose 17 percent. In 1966, the effective tax rate on capital income was 33 percent, on labor income around 18 percent. By 1985, the relationship was reversed, the former rates averaging 18 percent, the latter 21 percent.[12]

The immediate reason for this reversal was the steep rise in the payroll (Social Security) tax and the increasingly generous tax preferences granted to business at all levels of government. The rising power of business, together with the waning power of labor, lay at the root of this reversal. It's too early to say whether the tax reform will slow or halt the long-term shift of the tax burden to labor income. The political relation of forces has not changed. But the rise of industries less dependent on investment in heavy equipment and other capital goods than such older ones as steel, railroads, automobiles, etc. diminishes the relative economic importance of liberal depreciation write-offs and other investment tax aids. With the cutbacks or outright cancellation of these tax preferences under the tax reform, the *effective* corporation income tax rate may well rise, notwithstanding the scheduled reduction in the nominal rate. Hence, it is possible that the tax burden on labor will not continue to rise.

Next, look at the tax relief granted to low-income groups under the tax reform. The House version of the reform would ensure "that no families below the poverty level will have Federal tax liability."[13] That would be very good. Families in poverty had not only *not* gained from the 1981 tax cuts, their effective tax rate in fact kept rising. Where a family of four with earnings equal to the poverty line (adjusted for inflation) paid but 2 percent of its income in federal income and payroll taxes in 1979, by 1985 it paid an estimated 10 percent.[14] The tax reform simply reduces the percentage to pre-Reagan levels, as well as taking many poor families off the federal tax rolls altogether.

These scheduled gains should be viewed against the severe cuts in cash benefits and grants in kind suffered by poverty households under the Reagan administration. It is unlikely that these cuts are offset by the proposed tax gains. For example: A working mother of two grossing a monthly wage of $450 (in 1984 dollars) was at one time entitled to a monthly welfare supplement of $230. Under Reagan administration rules, this supplement was reduced to $50 a month after four months of work—an annual loss to such a family of more than $1,400.[15] That loss will but partially be made up by tax relief. Moreover, given the pettiness of Reagan-inspired eligibility rules, tax relief well may raise the mother's income above the limits set for food stamps, Medicaid, and other entitlements, making her no better and possibly worse off than before.

The End of Progressivity

BY FAR THE MOST SERIOUS failing of the tax reform is its virtual abandonment of progressivity. It is, in that sense, an antireform. "A tax bill that's un-

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ashamedly capitalist," proclaims Paul Craig Roberts, former assistant secretary of the Treasury under Reagan.[16] Or: "a historic retreat . . . a drastic change in what Congress views to be the proper distribution of the tax burden," as Richard Musgrave, dean of public finance economists, says.[17]

No calculations are yet available to show the extent to which progressivity has been lessened by the tax reform. The top marginal rate of the personal income tax, at 70 percent when Reagan took office, was cut to 50 percent in 1981, and would be cut further to 27 under the Senate or 36 percent under the House version of the reform. True, rates at lower income levels are also cut, and tax-free income at the bottom brackets is to rise. However, as Musgrave states, "this is not a change from past practice. . . . The proposed change merely returns the level of tax-free income to that of the poverty-income level."

The reduction of liabilities at the top of the income scale, however, "involves an actual loss in progressivity." In fact, if the revenues to be generated under the reform were compared, not to the revenues collected under current rates, but to what would be collected if the current rates were applied to the *broadened* base, "[we] would . . . see that the Senate . . . bill truly represents a very sharp reduction in the taxes of high-income earners." In 1978, a family with ten times the median family income paid 40 percent of its income in tax; by 1984, that had declined to 33 percent.[18] The tax reform would likely reinforce this downward trend.

The argument for progressive taxation is that it reduces the inequality of income. Not the only method, it recommends itself as a relatively peaceful one. For it to be implemented effectively, we need a favorable relationship of political forces.

Resistance to the lessening of inequality has certainly stiffened since the 1960s. I have already cited changes in the distribution of the tax burden between capital and labor. Joseph Pechman notes that "[The] effect of these changes was to reduce the progressivity of the tax system." This reduction was of course exacerbated by the 1981 cuts in the federal income tax.

Pechman writes that the distribution of income as he defines it, from 1966 to 1985, did not change; but since his income concept includes transfer payments, which rose steeply, "the distribution of income from market activity (wages and salaries, interest, dividends, rents, and windfall profits) must have become more unequal. Because the tax system became less progressive, the distribution of income *after* taxes and transfers was more unequal in 1985 than in 1966."[19]

The blow to progressivity under the tax reform, together with cutbacks in transfer payments—either already instituted or prompted by the falloff in revenue likely to result from the reform—will give freer rein to "market forces." And these forces, unless countered by a progressive tax system and income transfer programs, are bound to work toward greater inequality, as experience has amply shown. The ideology of Reaganomics, which has inspired this tax reform, can thus claim another victory. It is a victory for the rich, but one gained at their peril, for it will further sharpen existing inequalities, and further polarize American society.

There remains the question of why so many liberals have enthusiastically endorsed the "tax reform"—but *that* is part of the very political atmosphere in which such "reform" can flourish. □

Troubles with Books

Soviet authorities recently confiscated two of Karl Marx's books (in Hebrew) from a prominent Israeli visitor to Moscow, while letting him keep a Hebrew prayer book.

Shlomo Avineri, professor of political science at the Hebrew University and former director-general of the Foreign Ministry, was in Moscow last week at the invitation of the Soviet Academy of Sciences to participate in a colloquium on dialectical philosophy.

On arrival at Moscow's international airport, his baggage was searched and customs inspectors confiscated a translation into Hebrew of *Marx's Early Writings* and a new Hebrew translation of the Marx-Engels classic, *The Communist Manifesto*. Avineri pleaded with the head of the customs unit for half an hour, but failed to retrieve the books.

Avineri, who returned to Israel at the weekend, said the two books had the English titles on the back flaps. He added that a Hebrew prayer book he carried was inspected but not confiscated.

The story, which became the joke of the colloquium, caused the Soviet academicians "acute embarrassment," he said.

JERUSALEM POST
June 3, 1986

Notes

[1] *American Economic Review*, March 1928, p. 18.
[2] *Tax Reform for Fairness, Simplicity, and Economic*

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Growth. The Treasury Department Report to the President, Vol. 1, Overview (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary, Department of the Treasury), November 1984, p. 20.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. iv.

[4] Reprinted in *Comprehensive Tax Reform*. Hearings before the Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Part 1. May 30, 1985, p. 39.

[5] *Summary of Revenue Provisions in the President's Fiscal Year 1987 Budget Proposal*. Prepared by the Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, February 25, 1986, p. 29 ff.

[6] See R. McIntyre and D. Tipps, *Inequity and Decline* (Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities), 1983.

[7] *Economic Issues Relating to the House-Passed Tax Reform Bill (H.R. 3838)*. Prepared by the Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, January 29, 1986, p. 6.

[8] "Disarm the Deficit: End Corporate Tax Dodges," by R.S. McIntyre, in *Comprehensive Tax Reform, op. cit.*, pp. 360–361.

[9] *Economic Issues, op. cit.*, p. 5.

[10] The *Wall Street Journal*, June 27, 1986, p. 54.

[11] See also R.S. McIntyre, in *Comprehensive Tax Reform, op. cit.*, p. 359, although he refers to the sequel to the November 1984 Treasury Report.

[12] Joseph A. Pechman, *Who Paid the Taxes, 1966-85?* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution), 1985.

[13] *Summary of H.R. 3838 (Tax Reform Act of 1986) as Reported by the Senate Committee on Finance*. Prepared by the Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, June 5, 1986, p. 2.

[14] Robert Greenstein, director, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, testifying before the Senate Committee on Finance, June 17, 1985.

[15] See D. Lee Bawden and J.L. Palmer, "Social Policy: Challenging the Welfare State." In *The Reagan Record*, J.L. Palmer and I.V. Sawhill, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger), 1984, p. 192. The calculation is mine—H.B.

[16] *Business Week*, June 9, 1986, p. 16.

[17] The *Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 1986, editorial page.

[18] J. Minorek of The Urban Institute, quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 1986, p. 62.

[19] Who Paid the Taxes? *op. cit.*, pp. 8–10.

Abraham Brumberg

Nicaragua: Sending Guns and Sermons

It was all to be expected: a few days after 221 members of the House of Representatives voted to provide the Nicaraguan "freedom fighters" with $100 million in new aid (plus another $400 million from the CIA's "contingency" coffers), the Sandinistas struck back. The emergency regulations promulgated in October 1985, said President Daniel Ortega, heretofore applied only "sporadically," would now be enforced with "full vigor." *La Prensa* was closed down "indefinitely"; Bishop Antonio Vega, vice-president of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference, was escorted unceremoniously across the Honduran border; and Msgr. Bismark Carballo, press spokesman for Cardinal Obando y Bravo, was grounded in Miami, his reentry visa to Nicaragua canceled.

The reactions of the American liberal community to these measures were, if anything, even more predictable. Some columnists lapsed into stunned and disillusioned silence. Others pointed out that the Sandinistas had finally (what a relief!) displayed their true colors. The prize goes to the *New York Times*, which in the past had published perceptive editorials on Nicaragua. No more. The closing of *La Prensa* and the ouster of the two churchmen, said a *Times* editorial, marks a quantum leap into pure "Stalinism."

The cries of outrage, no less than the pained silence, however predictable, are nevertheless remarkable. Never mind the editorialist, whose ignorance spans Stalinism *and* Nicaragua. Never mind, too, those benighted representatives, who appar-

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ently thought that by providing more weapons to the *contras* they would hasten the advent of Jeffersonian democracy in Nicaragua. But why all this handwringing about the Sandinistas' actions? Could anyone have expected them to react differently? Half a billion dollars, after all, buys a lot of war. Were the Sandinistas supposed to prepare themselves for the expanded slaughter by liberalizing their laws?

The closing of *La Prensa*, we have been told, was not a wise thing from a "public relations point of view." A more serious criticism would focus on long-range implications: it is much easier to close a paper than to revive it. In the best of all possible worlds, human, civil, and political liberties flourish even under adverse circumstances. But in the real world such circumstances do matter. One hundred and twelve thousand Japanese were interned after Pearl Harbor, and kept in detention camps for four years. Ten years later, a demagogue from Wisconsin created an atmosphere in which thousands of people were mortified at the thought that they may have possibly sat, once upon a time, next to a "card-carrying" member of the Young Communist League. Fifteen years on, during the Vietnam War, sundry police and National Guard forces showed precious little respect for the First Amendment. In France during the Algerian war, massive arrests and torture were commonplace. And in the "Diplock" courts established by the British government in Northern Ireland, political defendants have been denied the right to trial by jury and sentenced only on the basis of their own confessions—the latter frequently obtained by coercion.

IF SUCH ABUSES can take place in prosperous and stable Western democracies, is it any wonder that Nicaragua—a country tottering on the brink of economic disaster, forced to divert its limited resources into the war effort, and faced (if the *contras* fail) with the prospect of outright American military intervention—resorts to drastic "emergency" measures? Indeed, given the fact (as I tried to illustrate in my last two articles in *Dissent)* that the Sandinistas are hardly intent on emulating a liberal or social democratic model, it is astonishing that those measures have not been considerably more drastic and "vigorous."

Let me be as clear as possible: It is bad that *La Prensa* has been shut down. Consistent defenders of human rights are entitled to criticize that. But when those who vote for or support the funding of the *contra* forces suddenly become pious about the repressive actions of the Sandinistas, it makes one a little sick.

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Yes, *La Prensa* is no more. But *La Prensa* (whose editor, in March 1985, justified the *contra* attacks as "essential") has been, to all intents and purposes, an ardent ally of the forces trying forcibly to overthrow the government. So have Msgr. Carballo and Bishop Vega (who at a press conference held on July 2 of this year opined that the "only aggression we are suffering from comes from the East"). Six or eight months ago (see my article in the Summer 1986 *Dissent*) one might have legitimately wondered whether the idea of an "internal front"—used by the Sandinistas to justify the new state of emergency—had any substance. But who could doubt that the CIA, its powers vastly expanded, would now resort to sabotage and mayhem, using its allies inside the country for this purpose? A good part of the Catholic hierarchy, including Vega and Carballo, have come out openly against the military draft—a situation no country at war can tolerate. Why should Nicaragua?

My profound reservations, criticisms, and suspicions about the Sandinista regime notwithstanding, I regard its response to the *contra* vote as altogether understandable. To criticize the Sandinistas for human rights violations—as has, for instance, Americas Watch—is right and necessary. To use wildly inflated rhetoric (e.g., "Stalinism") in describing the Sandinistas' response to the new military threat is not only to lose sight of reality; it is, in effect, to stamp a seal of approval on Reagan's war. If outrage and indignation are called for, they should be directed at the worst perpetrators of human rights violations in Central America—the death squads in Salvador and Guatemala, which continue their grisly work without fear of retaliation (100,000 corpses thus far in Guatemala, according to Victor Perera in "Can Guatemala Change?," *New York Review of Books*, August 14, 1986); and the Somocista-led gangs outside and inside Nicaragua, fed, armed, and coddled by the American government.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE? According to some observers, the renewed aid to the *contras* is a godsend for those *comandantes* in the Sandinista government who have long objected to "appeasing" the United States, and who now insist that the time has come to cleanse the revolution of all its "bourgeois illusions" and appurtenances. Judging by the relatively mild nature of the crackdown, and by Ortega's behavior during his July trip to the United States, there is no reason to assume that the Sandinistas have given up hope of reaching an accommodation with Washington—or at least of winning more support in this country. But the current climate is not likely to last. The war will surely escalate, and so will the Sandinistas' measures against their adversaries, real, potential, or imagined. Already Nicaragua is haunted by the specter of mass hunger. If there are food riots in the cities, they will no doubt be suppressed: the Sandinistas are painfully aware of this eventuality, and are trying to avoid it. But it may happen—with disastrous political consequences.

Nicaragua's dependence on the Warsaw Pact and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) is likely to increase: shortly after the U.S. Congress vote, the Soviets began to supply more heavy weapons to Nicaragua, though thus far of a defensive nature only. Another likely victim is the Contadora Treaty. To be sure, there is not much chance for its approval as long as Washington's policy is to depose the Sandinistas rather than to negotiate with them, and as long as it keeps pressuring the Central American states to raise their ante as soon as the Sandinistas make new concessions. (Perera reports that U.S. economic aid to Guatemala "was recently lowered from last year's $101 million to $77 million," clearly as a reprisal for President Cerezo's calls for "withdrawal of U.S. aid to the *contras*.")

By now, however, Managua has been effectively deprived of any incentives to make concessions, or indeed to participate in the Contadora meetings: for what purpose is there in agreeing to the reduction and limitation of weapons and to an intricate panoply of verification mechanisms—as it did in June of this year—if the United States is in the meantime providing its enemies with those very weapons?

EVER SINCE I BECAME INTERESTED IN NICARAGUA, I have believed that in the conflict between the centralizing and authoritarian impulses of the Sandinista revolution and those that pull it in a more open and pluralistic direction, the latter might prevail—provided Nicaragua can be freed from the curse of war and is allowed to benefit from help, advice, and calibrated pressure from the West. There is, I suppose, no compelling reason to abandon that hope—not yet. Western Europe is still propping up the Nicaraguan economy; political parties, their field of maneuver restricted more than ever before, nevertheless manage to publish their own bulletins and to broadcast daily on some of the country's fifty radio stations; there have been no sweeping waves of arrests (as human rights organizations have attested), and most detainees are released within a short time. The National

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Assembly still functions. Discussions about the constitution go on. But the prospects are grim. This may gladden the hearts of those besotted with the doctrine of "the worse, the better." But the vast majority of the Nicaraguan people, and their friends in the West, have no cause for rejoicing. □

Gordon Adams

Arms Control: Reality and Mirage

AUGUST 15, 1986

As we move toward the 1986 elections, the prospect of a U.S.-Soviet arms control agreement has become simultaneously more visible and more of a mirage. The sense of progress has been heightened by a rapid exchange of letters and public statements between President Reagan and Soviet party leader Gorbachev, by sudden U.S.–Soviet meetings on nuclear testing and the SALT II limits, and by renewed discussions about a second summit meeting.

THE RECENT FLURRY of activity followed a difficult, even tendentious six months, which saw the Soviets fill airwaves, newspapers, and diplomatic in boxes with comprehensive proposals for steep reductions in offensive weapons, an extension of their testing moratorium, and calls for positive American responses to Soviet initiatives. The American position was volatile, moving from relatively positive signals in January 1986 (especially about European intermediate forces) to diplomatic cold shoulders to Soviet proposals that would link offensive reductions with restrictions on the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") programs and would have both nations join in the testing moratorium.

As debate over the defense budget in Congress rolled into high gear, however, the administration's policies turned more positive, with welcoming presidential rhetoric and a sudden willingness to talk with the Soviets (outside the Geneva framework) on testing and SALT II. There are significant underlying reasons for this change:

- Clearly the Soviets are anxious to cut a deal. Secretary of Defense Weinberger, the leading administration skeptic with respect to Soviet intentions, has acknowledged that the Soviets "want and need an arms reduction agreement." (Lou Cannon, "Weinberger Warns Against SDI Tradeoff," *Washington Post*, July 22, 1986.) The urgent need for reform in the Soviet economy and the costs of the arms race are key elements in the Soviet desire for progress.
- The White House appears increasingly concerned about what history will say of Ronald Reagan. With only two more years to go, the desire to leave a presidential legacy of peacemaking seems to be growing.
- Both sides appear to have left plenty of room for negotiation and lots of things to negotiate about. The possibilities now include:

  An intermediate nuclear force agreement, with the U.S. pulling out some or all of its cruise and Pershing II missiles, the French and British freezing their nuclear forces at a specified level after completion of their current modernization plans, and the Soviets withdrawing and destroying some or all of their SS-20 missiles.

  A general agreement on offensive forces, with both sides cutting their land-based missile forces and agreeing to restrain new sea-based forces.

  An even broader agreement, in which deep offensive reductions are tied to restraints on strategic defenses—limits on research and development, mutual acceptance of a limited interpretation of the 1972 ABM treaty (with revisions), and/or an agreement to abide by that treaty for some time into the future.

  An agreement on conventional forces in Eu-

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rope, including mutual notification and observance of troop movements or troop reductions in both alliances.

An agreement on chemical weapons dealing with verification of the destruction of existing stocks or even prohibiting new production and deployment.

The arms control agenda has not seemed so promising since "détente" in the 1970s. Yet there are also strong indications that much of this apparent progress could be a mirage, with severe limits—set largely by domestic politics—on the degree to which current promises could become real agreements.

- While the U.S.–Soviet arms control agenda is full, so are their strategic arsenals, in fact, increasingly so. The current U.S. program is now virtually complete: B-1 bombers, air-launched cruise missiles on B-52 bombers, the Trident I submarines and missiles, the first fifty MX missiles in silos, and sea-launched cruise missiles aboard Navy vessels. The next wave is on its way; strategic programs have been the first priority of the Weinberger budgets: stealth bombers, the Midgetman missile, a new air-launched cruise missile, the Trident II sub and missile, and, above all, the Star Wars program.
- Genuine arms control remains hostage to internal politics in the Reagan administration. What was once Strobe Talbott's "war of the two Richards" (Perle v. Burt) has become the Weinberger (and Perle) v. Shultz (and Nitze) war. One step forward and one step back, the protagonists have danced around a genuine negotiation. When Gorbachev proposed a comprehensive package in January 1986, the initial American response looked open; behind the scenes its opponents worked to toughen the U.S. position leading to the end of U.S. compliance with SALT II. (Advantage, Weinberger–Perle.) Then talks took place over testing, SALT II, and a second summit. (Advantage, Shultz–Nitze.) Each step toward progress, moreover, contains a poison pill: the U.S. agenda for the talks on testing did not include a test ban, it focused on verification of ongoing tests and tying reduced testing to deep cuts in offensive weapons, further delaying the testing issue.
- The ebb and flow of administration activity on arms control seems to respond more to congressional politics than to international opportunity. Was it accidental that the administration agreed to discuss SALT II, testing, and the link between offensive reductions and Star Wars just as amendments and funding in the defense budget relating to these questions were being debated in Congress?
- The administration may also seek to create hope about arms control during the fall 1986 electoral season. Arms control is not the leading issue in 1986, but with the control of the Senate hanging in the balance, the administration scarcely wants to let the Democrats seize this issue to advantage.

WILL THE "VISIBLE MIRAGE" bring us arms control? Actually, prospects are modestly good for a limited agreement: on European forces and confidence building measures or on a statement of principles for a broader agreement. Even these could be sidetracked or highly limited because of the influence in the Department of Defense of dedicated opponents of arms control.

In the Congress, defense budgets will be constrained (thanks to $640 toilet seats and the federal deficit), but the strategic buildup will not slow appreciably. The Star Wars program will be at the heart of the argument over the buildup, though support for a large SDI program is waning. There have been major shifts in the nature of the Star Wars program. Technologies that emphasize early interception of adversary missiles are slowly being superseded by an emphasis on technologies that are ground-based and designed for terminal interception. The astrodome rationale has begun to erode and is being replaced by a site defense argument, which is an integral part of counterforce and deterrence thinking. Even General Daniel Graham, director of the pro-SDI advocacy group High Frontier, now agrees that the current Strategic Defense Initiative plan is more integral to deterrence than it is an alternative to it. Finally, the Paul Nitze rationale for SDI (that it must be "cost effective at the margin," i.e., the Soviets should not be able to overcome SDI more cheaply than it costs to build and deploy the system) is being replaced by an "affordability" doctrine (that we should build what

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we can "afford," whatever the cost to the Soviets of overcoming it). The Star Wars program continues, in any case, to drive the arms race, with the Soviets adding warheads and systems to foil that defense, as the U.S. will do in return.

BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE "REAL" PROGRESS on arms control, however, Congress is also likely to intrude even more into the policy arena, especially if the Democrats win control of the Senate. In 1985, Congress legislated a moratorium on U.S. testing of antisatellite weapons against a fixed object in space, as long as the Soviets continued their own moratorium on ASAT testing. Such efforts were mounted in 1986 on a testing moratorium and on staying within the SALT II limits. It is unusual for the Congress to play such a role; a continued arms control stalemate will increase the pressure for further such actions over the next two years.

By 1989, the visible mirage may have given us a small step toward arms control. It will also have left us with less security at the level of strategic nuclear arms than we had at the start of the decade and a far more complex arms control problem for the next administration. □

Patricia Cayo Sexton

The UAW at 50—Still Going Strong

Having closely tracked the UAW for more than forty years of its fifty-year history, through two auto worker parents, three years on a Dodge main assembly line, a decade of working for it, and a husband with thirty-five years as member and staffer, I am convinced that the spirit of Walter Reuther is still alive in the UAW and that, despite some ups and downs, the union, which celebrates its fiftieth birthday this year, has held to the standards of performance set during the long Reuther years, though Walter's brother, Victor, disagrees.

What has changed is less the union than its context: the heavy siege laid on unionism by its opponents. The war is an old one. American unions, less fortunate than their European counterparts in having American capitalism as their adversary, have always been heavily besieged; but somehow they have pulled through and undoubtedly will again, though not easily.

The Reuther era in the UAW was expansionist, organizing new industries, pioneering socialist-inspired contract demands, and generally prevailing over assaults of employers. But the new siege tactics have had a deadly impact on industrial relations. They have pushed the UAW back, forced it to contract some operations, and changed what was once an annoying leakage—the runaway shop—handled in the union by a small "competitive shop" department, into a massive hemorrhage of plant closings, overseas investment, and invasion by anti-union foreign industry.

So far only concessions have resulted, first in existing contracts, where losses have often been recouped, and now, it is charged, in contracts for plants yet unborn. Thus, the major, though unscheduled, issue at the 1986 triennial constitutional convention in California June 1-6 was the UAW-GM Saturn agreement, which involves building the small GM Saturn in Tennessee under a union contract that departs in some contested ways from the industry pattern and that, its critics say, makes wage and work-rule concessions that may spread to master agreements. Though not a convention delegate, Victor Reuther joined the opposition to the agreement (and to a few other executive board positions), charging that it cannot be initially ratified by Saturn workers since they have not yet been hired, and also that it introduces merit pay, reduces job classifications, and moves the union back.

THE UNION'S EXECUTIVE BOARD insists that the agreement is a good one, the best in the South; that the contested contract terms will not spread; that successful precedents exist for such prenatal agreements (as in the Toyota plant at Fremont, Califor-

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nia)—and of greatest importance, that the agreement gives the union its first big toehold in the "right to work" state of Tennessee. To date the largest domestic obstacle to union growth and political clout has been the almost impenetrable anti-unionism of the South, so the Board had a strong point, one supported by a solid delegate vote at the convention.

Debates in the union over concessions are real, legitimate, and healthy, but they cannot ignore the obvious: that unions strike best from positions of power, that is, on the up-cycle of the industry, not the down. Nor should they detract from the UAW's remarkably successful record, against heavy odds, in holding its membership at more than one million (from a recent low of 920,000 in 1983 and a high of 1.5 million in 1969), and in rescuing countless jobs in auto that otherwise would have gone down the deindustrialization tube.

Compared to pauperized left groups, the UAW is wildly affluent—as indeed are most unions in the Western world compared with even their most successful political parties—but compared with the corporations they must engage, their assets belong in piggy banks. In 1985 the UAW's income was $422.8 million, of which some $85.5 million went to the strike fund, raising that fund's balance to about $680 million . . . but, in case of a strike, the cost of benefits for GM workers alone would now run about $308 million per month, nearly half the fund's balance.

The departure from the union of some 140,000 Canadians is saddening, since they added a strong social democratic and international tone. Walter Reuther probably would have resisted their departure, unlike brother Victor who, again using the "concessions" issue, actively encouraged the Canadians to leave. (Canadian wage rates, despite past U.S. concessions, given present currency exchange rates, lag some $3 an hour behind those of the U.S.) Other UAW membership losses have been suffered in auto and parts, which now make up 68 percent of membership. GM and Ford have held fairly constant, with GM alone at nearly a third of all members. Agricultural implement has shrunk to about 6 percent of the total, while aerospace, 7 percent of UAW membership, has grown, along with the "other" category, which is now 19 percent.

The "other" is a hot organizing arena, and some startling victories have been scored there. The UAW—a private sector, largely auto, blue-collar and male union—has been organizing "others" who tend to be public sector, white-collar, and female. The organizing campaign resulted this year in the creation of the second largest local among the union's 1,300—Local 6000, made up of 22,000 Michigan public service workers, about half clericals (90 percent female) and half human service workers (50 percent female). Local 6000 makes a strange mate for what has been, off and on, the union's largest local, the rough-and-tumble Ford Rouge Local 600. At the infamous battle of the overpass at the Rouge in May 1937, very near the UAW's birth date, Ford thugs seriously injured a score of UAW organizers, including Walter Reuther. Local 6000 came into being less violently but with no less union rejoicing over a victory fitting its fiftieth anniversary. The ten top officers of the new local include four women; 320 people contested for 19 offices on the local's executive board.

Public interest seems to feed on struggle and scandal. Some of the latter has afflicted the UAW recently, most notably in the form of kickbacks from compensation lawyers to one board member (now banished from office); but as President Owen Bieber told the convention, after deploring such conduct, "The only place you can find a million people and no corruption is in the cemetery."

Struggle has been the union's daily fare, involving in the old days not only companies and locals but the union's warring factions. These struggles have changed, with some loss of public interest. While embattled more than ever, the union no longer stands outcast and starving, and the factionalism that once drove UAW activists is, except for some forlorn remnants, a thing of the past. At the convention, a young woman with a sectarian flair rose to charge the union with having a "symbiotic relationship with the company"; in the old days, the kindest version would have been "getting into bed with the bosses." Times change.

The factions arose from ideological more than power struggles, and as such may never return. The debates and commitments are missed, disruptive and sectarian as they often were. They sharpened wits and skills, and for a time turned attention away from shop grievances and toward larger issues and fuller visions of what a society should be like. At times the union bled from internal conflict, but it also enjoyed greater growth during that period than at any other time in its history.

The virtues of such factionalism, however, were also vices for, as Sam Gompers saw, short-term goals can be shared far more easily than long-term visions, and internal conflicts can tear a union apart. Moreover, when the visions are labeled "un-American" as they have been by the press and inquisitorial committees, the public reputation of

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unionism is clouded and its power reduced. Unionism has always needed to protect its political and patriotic flank in conflicts with employers.

Owen Bieber's exposure to social ideologies has apparently come much more from his devout Catholicism than from ideas on the secular left, yet in some ways he resembles Walter Reuther more than his predecessors, Doug Fraser and Leonard Woodcock, both of them ex-"altar boys" heavily exposed to socialist ideas. Like Walter, Bieber's background is Germanic and like Walter, the "boy scout" as we called him, he is basically a small-town person, optimistic, lacking any cynicism, rather puritanical, and worldly only in a political sense. The passionate and persuasive oratory is not there but it may be coming, as indicated in Bieber's spirited defense of the Saturn agreement and his adroit handling of his first convention as president. Perhaps most special about him is his deep rootedness in the working class. Most UAW officers produce upwardly mobile offspring. All five of Owen's children work in the shop and are UAW members, activists, and some of them local officers.

What is best about the UAW is that its shape and leadership are as much bottom-up as top-down. We tend to personify big organizations, focus too much on their CEOs, hence the rash of Iacocca-type ads that link corporations with the personality of their top officers. With businesses, that may be all there is, but the bottom-up thrust of most unions requires a deeper look at other layers and also at the cult of personality and celebrity that is overwhelming us all. Fortunately, the bottom-up flow in the UAW, and the familiarity of voters with candidates, mitigates the worst of personality cultism, but some longing for heroes and messiahs, where mere good examples should suffice, persists even there.

Victor Reuther's falling out with UAW leadership began with Walter's death and Victor's subsequent opposition to Leonard Woodcock's presidential candidacy. When Woodcock won board nomination against Fraser by one vote, Victor fell into disfavor. Woodcock's later crucial role in nominating Jimmy Carter (unintentionally netting Woodcock the Chinese ambassadorship but unionism only setbacks) did not heal the breach, despite Woodcock's good work in the UAW and public office.

Although Reuther remains strongly devoted to the UAW, he is actively critical of the current leadership and the estrangement continues, as it does with too many others. The union, especially because it is generally democratic, is a huge ganglia of politics and power relations, involving some inevitable dirty tricks, yielding far too little lingering recognition, and producing far more losers than winners in election contests. Perhaps only those who have felt the high of working for such a cause, in such a dynamic and influential movement, can know the pain of separation.

On its side, the union cannot afford the separation or loss of any former or prospective support. It cannot go it alone. Some of labor's critics, looking out at the vast void on the left and the malignant growths on the right, have softened their attacks on unions. Stanley Aronowitz, for example, contributor to the reams of "New Left" critiques of unions, which helped turn a whole generation of left-leaning youth away from unions, has at last discovered some virtue even in Gompersism. Of course, there is much to criticize in union behavior, but when looking at the UAW convention, for instance, one might notice, as David Moberg in *In These Times* did not, that almost every resolution considered (even on foreign policy), every speaker chosen, almost every opinion expressed might have come as well from a Democratic Socialists of America convention, and that moreover the convention procedures were, if anything, more democratic than DSA's. Instead, the Moberg report, "Why unions wane: a UAW report" sees only wrongdoing: interference by the board with the board candidacy of Jerry Tucker, a highly regarded, innovative staffer who lost by a margin of two-tenths of a vote.

Even those supporting the incumbent seemed to agree that Tucker's election would improve UAW leadership; the vote, which may yet be reversed, was appallingly close; and board members who were against him, mainly because they dislike seeing incumbents so easily opposed, did not wear kid gloves. But neither did they use brass knuckles or steal votes. Both sides played some fairly hard ball. The board defended itself with a rule agreed to by the whole caucus (of which Tucker was part) that a staffer who runs for the board must declare at least ninety days before the convention and take a leave for that period in order to campaign. The rule is not unreasonable since it is hardly fair to expect a board member to walk confidently into a convention only to be suddenly challenged by someone from his own staff. Also unnoticed in the Moberg piece was the defeat of another incumbent at that convention by a staffer, John Flynn, who abided by the caucus rule and was subjected to barely a murmur of board protest. Incumbents can be ousted and union leadership can become precarious enough to produce some cases of paranoia.

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The flaw in the union, however, is not paranoia or loss of heart or of the good sense that has usually guided it, but rather time, overload, and the assaults on it by various enemies and "friends," all of which leave it focused on survival at a time when it needs to get a grip on management's prerogative to cut jobs, close plants, manage badly, invest poorly —as well as some way to grapple with the crushing power of American corporations to buy elections, manipulate public opinion, pollute our living space, play dangerous war games, tilt riches and power ever upward, and scorn the need for planned world economic prosperity and stability. That, in a big nutshell, is *the* problem, one that lies in an advanced case of economic autocracy, the cure for which requires some rapid movement toward economic democracy.

Getting it is the second big problem. □

Jan Rosenberg

Hard Times for the Women's Movement

In the era of Reagan the women's movement has lost its center. Social activism of all kinds is retreating, and feminism is no exception.

The National Organization for Women (NOW), during the post-ERA presidency of Judy Goldsmith, suffered substantial losses in its membership and treasury. A recently renewed militancy strains to reverse this decline by emphasizing two "big issues" from the 1970s: abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Eleanor Smeal, newly reelected president of NOW, is dedicated to "raising hell" as well as consciousness. NOW organized a major demonstration in Washington last March (estimates ranged from 80,000 to 120,000) in behalf of legalized abortion. NOW's leaders insist that the right to an abortion is central to women's freedom. Although feminist rhetoric has shifted substantially since the 1960s, from "population control" to "abortion on demand" to "a woman's right to control her own body" or "pro-choice," some underlying moral reservations and questions of numerous women (many of them feminists) go unanswered.

Even with the revised "pro-choice" label, critics argue, abortion can easily become just another form of birth control, with no understanding of the profound difference between, say, an eight-month-old fetus and a recently united ovum and sperm. The moral ambiguities surrounding abortion may not lend themselves to political organizing and catchy slogans, but the dangers of ignoring these complexities should be obvious by now. These problems will not disappear; ignoring them creates an opening for the not-so-new right.

The Equal Rights Amendment, the other major feminist initiative of the 1970s is also back in the headlines. President Smeal promises to win that battle this time around, ignoring the opposition of many women who fear more gender-blind legal "assistance" like that ushered in with divorce law reforms.

An either-or view of abortion that opposes the *rights* of the woman to those of the fetus is lopsided and bound to leave vast numbers of people dissatisfied. This "rights" perspective emphasizes individual autonomy while neglecting an essential but different morality, one that values connection, caring, and responsiveness to the most vulnerable. We need a far more complex approach that incorporates and tries to reconcile these entangled claims. Such an approach would distinguish between early and late abortions, highlight the normative superiority of birth control prior to conception. It would also entail developing adoptive and social services to support the unwanted children who will, inevitably, be born. Consensus around

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such an approach might also build broad support for publicly funding abortions in the early months of pregnancy. By expanding the discussion morally and intellectually feminists could speak to the qualified support that most women and men have given abortion over the years.

Neither of these issues gets at the two fundamental problems facing women today: increasing impoverishment even as their individual freedoms expand and the conflicting demands of work and family. Even if the Democrats recaptured the White House in 1988 and NOW were to achieve its two major goals, the women's movement would still be in deep trouble. The troubles of feminism have as much to do with success as with defeat.

Attention to Women in the Work Force

MORE AMERICAN WOMEN THAN EVER BEFORE, including those with very young children, are in the labor force. In 1984, 70 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 54 were working. The percentage of mothers with children under age six who are in the labor force rose from 11.9 percent in 1950 to 18.6 percent in 1960 to 51.8 percent in 1984. Among those whose youngest children are of school age, labor force participation climbed from 28.3 percent in 1950 to 65.4 percent in 1984. Yet these enormous changes have not brought the radical transformations in women's conditions envisioned by 1960s feminists. Only about 10 percent of women work in the over-publicized, high-paid professions. Most women (about 80 percent) do "women's work" as typists, receptionists, and secretaries, as waitresses, retail clerks, and factory workers, as nurses and elementary school teachers. *In 1984, one out of every four women working full time earned less than $10,000 a year.* And to compound the problem, one out of every four mothers in the work force is maintaining her own family. The wage gap between men and women runs the gamut from high-paid professionals to low-paid service workers, but of course is a far more pressing problem for women at the bottom of the scale, where full-time wages hover around the official poverty line.

Despite these depressing trends, some feminist hopes and media biases blended into a familiar image—the successful, "supportive" helpmate who shares child care, cooking, and even laundry with his fast-track mate. Upper-middle-class men and women are more likely to give verbal support to this new ideal than are working-class adults, but research suggests that across classes the division of domestic labor remains nearly as lopsided as ever. The main change in household/family work ushered in by women's shift into the work force is an overall reduction in the *amount* of housework that gets done, not its distribution by sex. Fantasies to the contrary, women's move into the labor force did not fundamentally alter the division of domestic labor. There are complex reasons for this, including tradition and gender identity as well as the substantially unequal incomes, and thus power, of husbands and wives. But the bottom line is this: women at all class levels continue to do the lioness's share of housework and child rearing. (Affluent women hire out some of these tasks to other women; they don't persuade their husbands to do them.) It is also true, as my husband continually reminds me, that many men are doing more than they ever thought they would, if less than their wives had hoped. Many working mothers, particularly those in traditionally "female jobs," find themselves more exhausted than fulfilled, poorly paid in spite of equal pay legislation in some states, and still faced with the main responsibility for home and children—the "double day."

Attention to Women in Poverty

THE BITTEREST PILL TO SWALLOW is that women and children have become the poorest people in our society.[1] The decline of the traditional family, while genuinely liberating for some women, has delivered many more women into poverty. The ranks of women and children living in poverty include the growing proportion of lower-class teenaged mothers and their children as well as divorced women who previously had been supported by husbands.

Liberalized divorce laws have, unexpectedly, meant a loss of status and income for divorced women. Sociologist Lenore Weizman's startling findings deserve reiteration: the "equitable distribution of property" and "no fault" divorce laws, promoted by feminists in the 1970s, have, ironically, had devastating effects on women and children. Within a year of divorce the standard of living of the typical ex-husband rises 42 percent while that of the ex-wife (who probably has the kids) dives 73 percent! There is a growing awareness among feminists of the problems women face at both ends of the class scale. Think of the countless articles on the problems of "Having It All." Even fast-track women with annual salaries of $80,000 and more, and often working far more than forty hours a week, have to juggle the competing demands of work and family. As a woman journalist, an affluent, recently remarried mother

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of a ten-year-old and an infant put it: "You can hire a 'wife' to do the housework and cooking but you can't really hire a mother for your children." Sylvia Ann Hewlett's *A Lesser Life* is an extended, persuasive elaboration on this theme.[2]

One of the most acute new problems is that of working-class women in two-earner families. We still lack identifying labels and related observations and popular accounts that would sensitize us to this experience. While social science literature reinforced popular conceptions in the 1960s and 1970s by emphasizing male resistance to women working for pay, some current studies paint a very different picture. Among working-class as well as middle- and professional-class men and women, a two-income family norm is gaining broad acceptance. For men and women this is grounded in economic necessity. Blue-collar women are proud of their financial contributions to their families' well-being and suffer financially when they lose their jobs. When asked, they consistently express compelling psychological reasons for taking a job outside the home. For several decades now many women have preferred working, even in jobs that are monotonous, tedious or physically demanding, to the isolation and relentless responsibility of being home with small children.

Coalition-Building Potential

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT, POLITICALLY, about the behavioral changes I've been describing is that they could translate into support for policies that would ease the tensions of women's dual family and work roles. Several analysts have pointed to the glaring family policy gap between Europe and America, as though highlighting this disparity might embarrass the United States into enacting family allowances, parental leave policies, child care systems, etc. But the real opportunity comes now from the insistent and unmet needs that women and men experience regularly.

A recent study of the values and attitudes of "Democratic defectors" (those traditional Democrats who voted for Reagan in 1984), commissioned by the Democratic party, provides evidence that even in this group, clearly more conservative than Democrats who supported Mondale, there is a growing sensitivity to women's issues, particularly those concerning the work place and working women.[3] The men, like typical working women, define women's work in terms of its contribution to the family. From this perspective, the advancement of women at work is considered an economic necessity. According to the report summary;

> The women's issue is still very much a positive Democratic theme . . . if the focus is on the work place. The men . . . view women, not as a competitor, but as a member of the household. Women in the work force represent an opportunity for the family to get ahead . . . to offset their vulnerability."

When the moderator in the study, trying to tap resentment against working wives, asked "Is too much time spent thinking about working women and not enough time spent on housewives?" the defectors didn't take the bait. One man summed up the views of the majority: "Right now I would say that you almost have to have the wife working." And another: "They [wives] have to [work], the cost of living is ridiculous." Searching for men's political resentment against women (as the study had earlier for whites against blacks), the moderator asked: "Is too much attention being paid to the condition of women?" Again the men's responses indicated an absence of hostility and a wellspring of sympathy.

Although the United States has not (or not yet?) developed a comprehensive family policy, it has not avoided the problems that would call such a policy into being. What we have is an off-again, on-again patchwork of state and federal laws, programs, and policies concerning taxes, wages, divorce and child support, family planning, pensions, income transfers, housing, and health care, all of which have major effects on American families. The evolution of a two-earner family may be providing an opportunity for new family policies to gain support. Several issues could become the fulcrum of American family policy. Economic difficulties stemming in large part from women's low wages might generate support for comparable worth and tax reform, just as parental struggles with conflicting family-work responsibilities may develop into support for child-care facilities and a parental leave policy that protects jobs of workers who are caring for a newborn or a seriously ill child.

Support for Comparable Worth

COMPARABLE WORTH IS A SPECIFIC initiative around which these new sentiments could coalesce. In promising to raise wages in traditionally female jobs it speaks to the problems of fairness, vulnerability, and economic weakness that women workers and their families now feel.

The historical origins of a sex-divided work force are complex and multidimensional, as crackling debates between feminist scholars have made clear in the recent Sears case. But the inadequacy of contemporary women's wages is clearer and more

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damaging than ever, a result of changing roles and family structures, and renders the elaborate legal and historical arguments irrelevant in many ways. It is unfortunate that these issues of basic need and fairness are being forced into the procrustean bed of overt discrimination and legal rights, but this is not the only arena in which these battles are being fought.

Even during the Reagan period comparable worth has made considerable headway; thirty states now have comparable worth bills pending or have commissions studying the issue. Washington state, despite its apparent legal victory over the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and comparable worth, is spending nearly $500 million to raise the pay of women workers. The House of Representatives passed a bill last October that would require a comparable worth study of federal workers.

Even more surprising than its success in the public sector is the extent to which major American corporations have been adopting forms of comparable worth. According to the April 28, 1986 *Business Week*, comparable worth is having some impact at AT&T, BankAmerica, Chase Manhattan, IBM, Motorola, and Tektronix. At some companies this has meant reshaping their job evaluation systems to avoid bias against work typically done by women. BankAmerica, for example, added eye strain to its definition of physical labor, thus incorporating a previously neglected factor in typically female jobs at video display terminals.

Some companies turn to comparable worth because they fear the high legal fees that will pile up if they are sued. Others no doubt fear that the pending Congressional bill calling for a study will be the opening wedge for government approval to comparable worth.

Taxes are another problem the response to which could both reflect and further generate a new national consensus. Federal tax policies have actually eroded family incomes considerably since the personal and dependent income exemption, the American equivalent of European children's allowances, was introduced at $600 per person in 1948. To offset the same percentage of per capita income today, the exemption would now be about $5,600, not the $1,000 per person to which it was recently raised. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan correctly points out, far fewer low- and moderate-income families would pay any income tax under these revised amounts.

In fact, and put somewhat differently, people now start paying income taxes even when they are officially designated as falling below the poverty line. Here is an issue of economic equity as well as a woman's and family issue, given the overwhelming proportion of women and children, and of female-headed families, among the poor in America. Tax reform needs desperately to be incorporated into the feminist agenda. If feminists truly want to broaden their base, this is an issue that promises to reach far beyond the professional middle- and upper-middle-class women the movement has represented and attracted in the past.

Need for Child Care

In a similar vein, child care remains a pressing problem that ever larger numbers of families with working mothers have to solve. There is no institutionalized solution to this problem. American individualism and the accompanying suspicion of government-provided services (particularly concerning the care of young children); racial and class stratification and the resultant stigmatization of means-tested child care programs aimed at blacks and/or the poor (Head Start is an important exception); and weaknesses in the child care coalition of the 1960s and 1970s have all been offered as reasons for the absence of a child-care policy in America. Even the women's movement has not seriously taken up this crucial issue in a way likely to mobilize broad support.

Feminist involvement in child care has been anchored mainly in women's, not children's, interests and has been part of the wider critique of inequality within the family. The main thrust of feminists' interest in child-care concerns has been to redistribute parental functions within the family, to relieve women of exclusive day-to-day responsibility for children. The early half-hearted calls for "free 24-hour-a-day child care" grew out of this goal. Finally, feminists' interest in child care reflect the conviction that children, freed from the corrupting influences of their traditional families, hold the key to a nonsexist future.

The most substantial (though still limited) child-care initiative in a long time is the Parental Medical Leave Act of 1986, a pending congressional bill that would provide parents with up to eighteen weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to care for a new baby or seriously ill child. Currently more than 60 percent of working mothers have no right to any maternity leave. The bill is designed to avoid the "trap" of women's special family-based needs and interests; it incorporates the feminist vision of gender equality by providing *parental*, not just maternity, leave. But as long as women remain the primary caregivers of young children and earn

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lower wages, it is doubtful that many fathers would seize this opportunity. Even as a de facto maternity leave policy the bill has serious weaknesses. Sheila Kammerman, probably the best-known American expert on European family policies, argues that for low-wage earners unpaid leave is not better than no leave at all; they can't afford to forgo their incomes, particularly at a time of increasing expenses. But according to Representative Patricia Schroeder, a major sponsor of the bill, it is a necessary first step and has a realistic chance of being voted into law despite vociferous small business opposition.

As things now stand, working parents are left on their own to construct and mend the patchwork arrangements that meet their, and their children's, needs. A surprisingly large number of parents work different shifts from each other in order to be at home for their children. An affluent few hire full-time nannies and housekeepers, most commonly before their children enter "full day" schooling. The misfit between children's school days and their parents' work days is a related issue; perhaps proponents of child care and full employment could come together around demands for a shorter work day.

Feminists' preoccupations with abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment have distanced the movement from the compelling daily concerns most families increasingly face within, and between, their work and family roles. Yet the dominant feminist strategy emphasizes the basic equality and sameness of men and women and thus the fight for equal rights. Alice Rossi's classic essay, "Equality Between the Sexes: An Immodest Proposal," sounded the clarion call for this vision in 1964, the early days of contemporary feminism.[4]

But a vision grounded in individual equality has obscured the special family-based roles and needs of women and has precluded a more pragmatic and policy-oriented approach that would introduce new public supports—for child care, family allowances, housing, taxes, and so forth—for women in their continuing traditional roles as mothers and wives. Rossi has again provided a clear and extreme formulation of the problem. Her 1977 "Biosocial Aspects of Parenting" repudiated her earlier "over socialized" conception.[5] By providing data grounded in endocrinological research she now argues that there are significant and irreducible differences between men and women that account for the universality of women's child-caring functions. One does not have to accept Rossi's conclusions about the endocrinological bases of mothering to recognize the pressing needs that women have, and by nearly all accounts want to have, as members of families. While the women's movement has tried to shed an earlier anti-family posture, it has not come to grips with women's family-centered roles and needs.

On one level the shift from "equal employment opportunity" to "comparable worth" reflects a changing conception of the meaning of difference. Comparable worth grows out of the undeniable fact that women continue to enter traditional women's occupations for reasons of their own, regardless of the low pay and status they receive. Their support for comparable worth policies indicates that they are no longer as willing to accept the low pay even though they still want these jobs. Perhaps with adept union leadership, comparable worth could evolve into one part of a socially responsive wages policy and address the pressing needs of American working families. □

Notes

[1] Economist Diana Pearce coined the term "Feminization of Poverty" in the late 1970s to connote the worsening economic situation of women and children.

[2] *See* Sylvia Ann Hewlitt, A Lesser Life: The Myth of Women's Liberation in America (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1986).

[3] Stanley Greenbert Analysis Group, *Focus Group on Michigan Democrats* (New Haven, Ct., 1986).

[4] Alice Rossi, "Equality Between the Sexes: An Immodest Proposal," *Daedalus* 93 (Spring 1964).

[5] Alice Rossi, "A Biosocial Perspective on Parenting," *Daedalus* 106 (Spring 1977).

SIDNEY LENS

We mourn the death of an old friend.

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Thomas B. Edsall

Money (and Politics) in Both Parties

Underlying the continuing financial advantage of the Republican party over the Democratic party are changes in the sources of cash for each party that have significant consequences for both policy and candidates. For the Democratic party, the pressure to raise money from the restricted sources available to it are functioning to push the party to the right. For the GOP, the changing pattern of fund-raising is more ambivalent, although key sources of money for both the party's right wing and for the conservative movement as a whole are drying up.

The Democrats, after making some fund-raising gains in recent years, are now falling further behind the GOP. More important, however, money is to a considerable extent a reflection of the internal balance of power within each party. In this respect, the patterns of contributions to both parties signal significant changes in direction.

For the conservative movement, and particularly for the groups and individuals attempting to convert the Republican party into an arm of that movement, the collapse of the oil industry is a disaster. Independent oilmen in Texas, Oklahoma, and to a lesser extent in Louisiana and Colorado, have been the financial mainstay of the political right in this country. The right-wing ideological allegiance of the industry dates back to at least the early 1950s, when Senator Joseph McCarthy was viewed by Texas oilmen as their third senator. The period from 1978 through the early years of the Reagan administration saw, however, a massive outpouring of financial commitment by independent oilmen suddenly made very rich by decontrol and OPEC-induced price increases. These oilmen poured their money into the campaigns of men and women challenging such liberal Democratic senators as Frank Church, John Culver and George McGovern; into such organizations as the National Conservative Political Action Committee; and into the Republican party.

FOR THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, these oilmen wearing cowboy boots and diamond rings provided a kind of frontier toughness to a party traditionally dependent for large contributions on eastern bankers and Fortune 500 executives; they were, within the GOP universe, what might be described as populists of wealth, financing the Reagan revolution.

With the collapse of oil prices, dropping from $38 a barrel in 1981 to about $11 at this writing, the money and vitality of the oilmen have almost disappeared from the national political scene. In Oklahoma, the number of "Eagles"—individuals willing to give at least $10,000 a year to the Republican National Committee (RNC)—has dropped from 140 in 1981 to 15 in 1986.

At the same time, however, the doubling of stock market prices since Reagan took office has functioned to restore New York and the Northeast as a mainstay of financial support for the Republican party. As major contributors, the oilmen have been replaced in large part by the chairmen, presidents, and CEOs of large corporations. In fact, over the past six years, the northeast has eclipsed the southwest, to become once more a major source of large campaign contributions to the RNC.

For the Republican party this may not be an unmixed blessing, because it suggests that the traditional view of the GOP as the party of the elite and of corporate America will gain additional legitimacy, at least in terms of the financial base of the party. In addition, it means that for the near future there is no financial base of support for the kind of conservative political challenge mounted in 1980; the kind of challenge that produced the

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election not only of a conservative president, but provided the troops to back him up in the House and Senate.

In 1980, in addition to President Reagan's victory, we saw the election of such conservative Republican senators as Steve Symms of Idaho, Charles Grassley of Iowa, Mack Mattingly of Georgia, Paula Hawkins of Florida, Alfonse D'Amato of New York, Jeremiah Denton of Alabama, John East of North Carolina, along with a cadre of new GOP House members who became known as Reagan's Robots. Most of these candidates not only got large amounts of support from oil, but received it very early in their campaigns, when the need is highest. There is no other source of committed money willing to gamble on seemingly marginal conservative candidates in the same way that the oilmen were willing to take financial-political risks in 1980.

SIMILARLY, THE CHANGING BALANCE of contributions to the RNC—which are an excellent indicator of the kind of money available to prospective presidential candidates—suggests that challengers to Vice-President George Bush will have difficulty raising adequate funds. The growing importance of New York-based money signals a strong core of support for an establishment candidate along the lines of Bush, just as the erosion of oil money means that conservative challengers to Bush have lost a potential source of support. This is particularly true for Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada, a key Reagan backer since 1976, who is viewed as the most likely beneficiary of anti-Bush sentiments within the southwest wing of the Republican party.

There are, however, two developments working against the partial restoration of Republican power to the traditional establishment wing—a restoration advantageous to Bush. The first is that the continued economic deterioration of the rust belt—the midwest industrial states—has meant a decline in money flowing from such states as Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, and Ohio. These states have in the past supported moderate Republican candidates, including George Bush, who in 1980 beat Reagan in both Iowa and Michigan. The second is the rise of California—where defense spending and trade with the Far East have produced a booming economy—as a source of major contributions. California is, in political money terms, a wild card. Although the state has a strong conservative movement, its donors have also shown a strong willingness to support candidates who, within the GOP ideological boundaries, are moderates, including the current Senate nominee, Ed Zschau, who outraised his conservative opponents in the primary, and Bush, whose political action committee has done very well in the state.

The Democrats

FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, money has increasingly become a force undermining coherence and commitment. The party desperately needs cash—its position relative to the GOP has worsened from a four-to-one disadvantage in 1983-84 to about six-to-one during the current election cycle—and party officials have responded to this pressure by turning to special interest groups.

The growing importance of money in elections works inherently to the advantage of Republicans: donors fall overwhelmingly in the top 20 percent of the income distribution, and it is there that allegiance to the Republican party is strongest. The GOP can make direct mail appeals to selected groups within this affluent universe (subscribers to the *Wall Street Journal*, holders of American Express Gold Cards) and expand its donor base through partisan and ideological appeals. For the Democrats, the direct mail donor base is far more restricted, limited effectively to affluent liberals in New York, Massachusetts, California, and academic communities scattered across the nation.

To compensate for this, the Democratic party has turned to two other sources of money: political action committees and a legally questionable form of contribution known as "soft money" (largely unreported donations made directly by corporations, unions, and by rich individuals who have already given the maximum amount allowed by federal law). Under strained interpretations of federal election law, "soft money" can be used for major capital expenses—new buildings or computers—and for local party development in states where there are no restrictions on campaign contributions.

THE RESULT IS THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, far more than the GOP, is dependent for survival on contributors who have little partisan or ideological interest in the party, but who do have a driving interest in gaining special legislative and administrative favors. The three major Democratic party committees—the national (DNC), congressional (DCCC) and senatorial (DSCC)—have so far in the current election cycle received a total of $4.5 million from political action committees, compared to the $993,000 in PAC money received by the parallel Republican committees. Not only does the Democratic party receive far more money from

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PACs, but, since the Democratic party raises far less money overall, the PAC contributions account for 18 percent of the party's budget, while for the GOP, PAC contributions amount to under 1 per cent of receipts. (About 40 percent of the PAC contributions going to the Democratic party committees are from organized labor; the rest are from corporate and trade association PACs. If the labor contributions are discounted, on the premise that labor shares broad goals with the Democratic party and is not seeking only to advance a special interest —a possibly questionable assumption in the case of some unions—the remaining PAC contributions still far exceed those going to the Republican party committees.) Soft money contributions are generally unreported, but interviews with officials of both parties clearly point to much heavier Democratic than Republican dependence on this kind of contribution, roughly paralleling that on the PACs. A third indicator of the strength of the lobbying community in the Democratic party is reflected in the geographic pattern of contributions to the two parties. From January 1, 1985, through June 30, 1986, just under 20 percent of the large contributions from individuals going to the DNC were from people in the Washington, D.C., area, the overwhelming majority of whom were lobbyists, lawyers, and corporate representatives; for the Republican National Committee just 7 percent of the contributions were from the D.C. area.

THE CONTRIBUTION PATTERNS POINT to a series of vicious circles for the Democratic party that do not appear likely to find resolution in the near future. The Republican party appears, to a certain extent, to have been able to gain broad favor among campaign contributors, an affluent elite who have been the major beneficiaries of both Republican tax policy and the rise in the stock market. This has allowed the party to raise unprecedented amounts of money, but also to provide money and services to non-incumbent challengers. Challengers have the most difficulty raising money but they are critical to any party attempting both to replenish normal losses and to win in all marginal contests.

The Democrats, in contrast, have developed a base of donors primarily interested in wielding influence with the party's incumbents, and with little or no interest in the partisan goal of strengthening Democratic challengers. While the chairmen and chief executive officers of major corporations are writing personal checks for $10,000 to the RNC because they agree with the broad economic goals of the GOP, their corporate PACs are writing $10,000 checks to the DNC and the DCCC to gain access to key members of the Democratic-controlled Ways and Means Committee.

Not only does the GOP have an overall financial advantage that translates quickly to clout on the critical terrain of contests involving challengers to incumbents, but money within the GOP functions to affirm the party's ideological and economic goals. For the Democratic party, however, money is ideologically divisive. There are no political contributions made from the group most loyal to the Democratic party—the bottom third of the income distribution—except insofar as labor contributions function to represent these voters. Instead, the Democratic party must appeal to a universe of affluent liberals and special interest lobbyists, two groups with little or no stake in the adoption by the party of more aggressively populist strategies.

FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, then, money will continue to distort the ability of the Democratic party to represent its own constituency and to restrict the scope of elective strategies. The movement toward a kind of pro-business, centrist Democratic strategy, reflected currently by the Democratic Leadership Council, has gained strength in part from the pressures on major Democratic fundraisers, seeking in many ways to develop a base within an essentially Republican constituency.

Conversely, while money does not produce for the Republican party internal conflicts with anywhere near the depth of those of the Democratic party, the shifts occurring within the GOP suggest that some of the vitality may be draining from the conservative-Republican alliance. One of the driving internal forces within the Republican party has been the angry repudiation of Wall Street, the Rockefellers, and the eastern bankers who dominated the party through 1960, a repudiation led by the new rich of the sunbelt, particularly oilmen.

Insofar as old-guard, eastern interests are regaining strength, the party will lose the momentum that comes from new money hungry to gain recognized status in a process uniquely possible within the American political system. In that light, while money may weaken the ability of the Democrats to put together a coherent challenge to the Republican party, the changing pattern of campaign contributions to the GOP is also undermining a source of strength within the GOP, which, for the moment, is likely to encourage a kind of ideological stasis between the two parties—with neither one able to capitalize decisively on changes in the economy, in the nation's demographics, and in the fluid political allegiances of the 1980s, to achieve permanent majority status. □

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Andrei S. Markovits & Anson Rabinbach

Why Waldheim Won in Austria

For many Americans Kurt Waldheim's resounding victory in Austria's run-off presidential election last June (he received nearly 54 percent of the vote, after finishing just shy of a first-round win) illuminated the dark side of a country more famous for skiing, waltzes, and pastry. Modern Austria is also renowned for its political stability and stellar social and economic performance, making it a model for other industrial democracies. In marked contrast to its troubled predecessor during the interwar period, the second Austrian Republic is a pacific "island of the blessed" in a tumultuous world. But beneath the placid surface lies a deeper legacy of the Nazi past, now exposed for the first time by Kurt Waldheim's victory.

Austria emerged from the ruins of 1945 divided and occupied by four powers. This situation helped create a national consensus to deny the country's complicity with the Third Reich by focusing on the separate character of Austrian nationhood. With the help of the 1943 Moscow Declaration, in which the wartime allies declared that Austria was the "first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression," the myth was born of the "good" victimized Austrians in contrast to the "bad" German conquerors. Austrians could henceforth blame their involvement in the war, with all its atrocities, on the Germans. A new and powerful image of an independent Austria, liberated from the predatory Prussians, could be offered to the world.

This posture was adopted by virtually all political groups in postwar Austria, with the exception of some marginal left-wing intellectuals. The myth surrounding the German occupation quickly yielded two results: first, it made the painful process of facing the past irrelevant, since Austria, like Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the rest of Europe, was victimized by German aggression. Second, it served to crystallize Austrian pride as a neutral, autonomous, and respected member of the family of nations.

Thus, Austrians never assumed responsibility for celebrating Hitler's "homecoming" with what was probably the largest and most enthusiastic crowd ever to assemble in Austrian history. This welcome was a far cry from the commonly-held myth of the 1938 *Anschluss* as the "rape of Austria." In fact, after World War I, most of the major parties in Austria favored *Anschluss* as a solution to the widely shared belief that the German-speaking part of the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire could not survive alone. After Hitler came to power in Germany, Austria's indigenous National Socialists (Nazis) accounted for 20 to 25 percent of the popular vote, offering him a ready-made fifth column. Other occupied nations provided Hitler with "Quisling" governments, but in Austria collaboration was far more widespread because of the popularity of *Anschluss*, the strength of the Austrian Nazi Party, and above all, the fact that Vienna (where Hitler received his "education") was the birthplace of modern political anti-Semitism. Small wonder that Hitler was received so warmly. As shown in the plebiscite held a few weeks later, the occupation of Austria in March 1938 was a conquest by popular acclamation.

Even if Austrians soon began to grumble about the German occupation—they disliked the "Germanization" of Austria more than they resented

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the ideological predilections of the new government—Austrian membership in the Nazi party was even higher than in Germany (10 percent of the Austrian population as compared to 7 percent of the German). Even more striking is the disproportionately large number of Austrians prominent in Hitler's war against the Jews. This inflated Austrian role in the "Final Solution" led Simon Wiesenthal to conclude that Austrians could be held responsible for the death of three of the approximately six million Jews exterminated by the Nazis, a fact which makes a travesty of Waldheim's persistent denial that he had heard of the deportations of Jews from Salonika and Corfu.

By adhering to the myth of victimization, postwar Austria could avoid facing its own history. Though former Nazis were denied the vote until 1949, denazification was largely a charade and many were soon welcomed into the ranks of all major parties. For this reason Austrians are particularly sensitive to uncomfortable questions about the Nazi era. Much of the research in this domain has been conducted by non-Austrians, and many of the Austrian archives for this period still remain closed.

Waldheim's xenophobic appeal to national pride overshadowed the well-documented evasions and omissions in his efforts to portray his past as different from what it actually was. Early in the campaign, the issue shifted from Waldheim's pattern of covering up his youthful connections to Nazi organizations and concealing his wartime record to what foreigners were saying about Austrians. His campaign literature effectively depicted him as the victim of an "organized" foreign slander campaign to discredit him and turn him into a war criminal. The World Jewish Congress was held responsible for "directing" an international campaign of "psychoterror," and, despite growing revelations that he was aware of brutal reprisals carried out against Yugoslav partisans in 1944, Waldheim persisted in his denial of any responsibility for the atrocities committed by his unit. Anti-Semitism was also the motif of the defiant campaign posters proclaiming that "We Austrians decide whom *we* will vote for." Given the history of postwar Austria, it is hardly surprising that such messages helped the Waldheim cause immensely. So did German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's blatant interference, *grossdeutsch* style, when he supported Waldheim during a visit to Salzburg, one week before the first-round election.

For most Austrians, Waldheim's call for "an end," after 41 years, to discussion of the Austrian role in the Nazi era, was a rallying cry to end what had never really begun. Waldheim provided this movement with its moral credo—his slogans ironically called for "moral renewal"—when, after finally admitting, in light of irrefutable evidence, that he knew of his unit's reprisals against partisans, he said, "knowledge alone is not a crime."

Only a small group of Austrian intellectuals (prominent among them was the writer Peter Handke), under the banner of "New Austria," tried to make Waldheim's character and responsibility for the Nazi past a real issue. Even the Austrian Greens—whose candidate, Freda Meissner-Blau, refused to throw her support to the Socialists—gave him 39 percent of their vote (mostly from the ecology-oriented wing in western Austria).

The Social Democratic opposition was timid to the point of passivity in combating Waldheim. Conceding that the anti-Semitism stirred by the campaign only increased Waldheim's popularity, Dr. Kurt Steyrer abandoned the issue of his opponent's war record in the run-off election. But, even in the earlier campaign, the Socialists were afraid to make an issue of his past because of the sympathy many of their own followers felt for Waldheim—former members of the Wehrmacht and ex-Nazis pursued careers in all the Austrian parties after the war, and some even served in Socialist governments.

The Socialists were further inhibited by the memory of their own recent scandal, only one year earlier. At that time, Walter Reder, a former Nazi convicted of war crimes, received an official airport welcome after his release from an Italian prison by Friedhelm Frischenschlager, defense minister in the Socialist-dominated government and himself a member of the Free Democratic Party. Even Socialist Foreign Minister Leopold Gratz, who resigned in protest after the election, complained that "the Waldheim case serves as a pretext to condemn the entire Austrian people."

Ironically, one of the consequences of Waldheim's victory is an intensification of the crisis that plagued the Socialists under the unsteady stewardship of Chancellor Fred Sinowatz, who also resigned in the aftermath of the election. The vote was interpreted locally as confirmation of the "exhaustion" of the Socialists' fifteen-year rule—even

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Waldheim's loss in the party's bastion of Vienna (he received 43.7 percent vs. 56.2 percent for Steyrer) was grimly received as a sign of a steep decline in Socialist popularity—making an opposition People's party victory in the upcoming parliamentary elections next spring more than likely.

The cynicism of most Waldheim supporters was summed up by Austria's most popular columnist, "Staberl," when he wrote, "Whoever is old enough to have a personal memory of the Thousand Year Reich that lasted only seven for us, knows that if Waldheim had been a full-fledged Nazi, he would never have been an insignificant Wehrmacht staff clerk but an SS man of high rank." Waldheim's campaign theme in the second round, "an experience for us all," made him a symbol for an entire generation, and encouraged Austrians to feel they were victimized by a foreign cabal. Vienna's tabloids reveled in Waldheim's triumph over the "cannibals" in New York and Tel Aviv, describing the campaign against him as "total war," explicitly borrowing a "quotation from Propaganda Minister Goebbels." In marked contrast to the European and American media, Austria's public radio and television stations (heavily influenced by the political parties) soft-pedaled the charges against him, and all of the Austrian newspapers, with the exception of the tiny Socialist *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, supported Waldheim. The Austrian presidential election became a plebiscite on responsibility for the Austrian past. Unfortunately, the majority of Austrians voted for self-deception. □

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(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

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Irving Howe

The Spirit of the Times

Greed, Nostalgia, Ideology & War Whoops

Taking the train from Westchester County to Grand Central Station, you pass some dreadful slums. The abandoned houses in these neighborhoods are boarded up, but some are adorned with fake windows—"Occupied-Look" decals—that are supposed to trick you into believing they are real windows. New York slumlords can buy these decals from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (100 Gold St., NYC) for $10 apiece, thoughtfully ranged in color from "Full Shade White" to "Black & Grey."

Is this not an emblem of life in the America of Ronald Reagan, the New York of Ed Koch?

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal constituted, let us say, a quarter-revolution. It introduced the rudiments of a welfare state and made "the socialization of concern" into a national value. It signified not a society egalitarian or even just, but at least one that modulated the harshness of "rugged individualism." All later administrations, at least until that of Reagan, more or less accepted the New Deal legacy. Under Reagan America experienced, let us say, a quarter-counterrevolution.

Segments of the American bourgeoisie had never accepted the general premise or sparse practice of what passed in America for a welfare state; they lived with it *faute de mieux*, waiting for a chance to shake off trade unions, social measures, and economic regulations. Ideological in a primitive way, they would have stared with incomprehension if you had suggested that their survival as a class might well have been due to the very social measures they despised. And then their moment came—with the inner disintegration of liberalism under Carter that opened the way for Reagan.

The more hard-bitten and fanatic Reaganites brought to office a maximum program: to undo the New Deal, which meant to demolish the fraction of a welfare state we have. When the limits of this perspective became clear to the president's managers (most starkly after the administration's defeat in Congress when it tried to tamper with Social Security), the Reaganites fell back, shrewdly enough, on their minimum program. They would weaken, reduce, cripple, starve out the welfare state. And in this, we must acknowledge, they often succeeded. While leaving intact the external structures of certain programs, they proceeded, with firm ideological malice, to cut out and cut down a good many other programs. They brought about a measurable redistribution of income and wealth in behalf of the rich, and they repelled any attempt to pass further social legislation—not that the chicken-hearted Democrats made much of an attempt. Perhaps most important, the Reaganites managed to create a political atmosphere in which the social forces favoring the welfare state were forced onto the defensive. The very idea of a national health act, for example, was no longer

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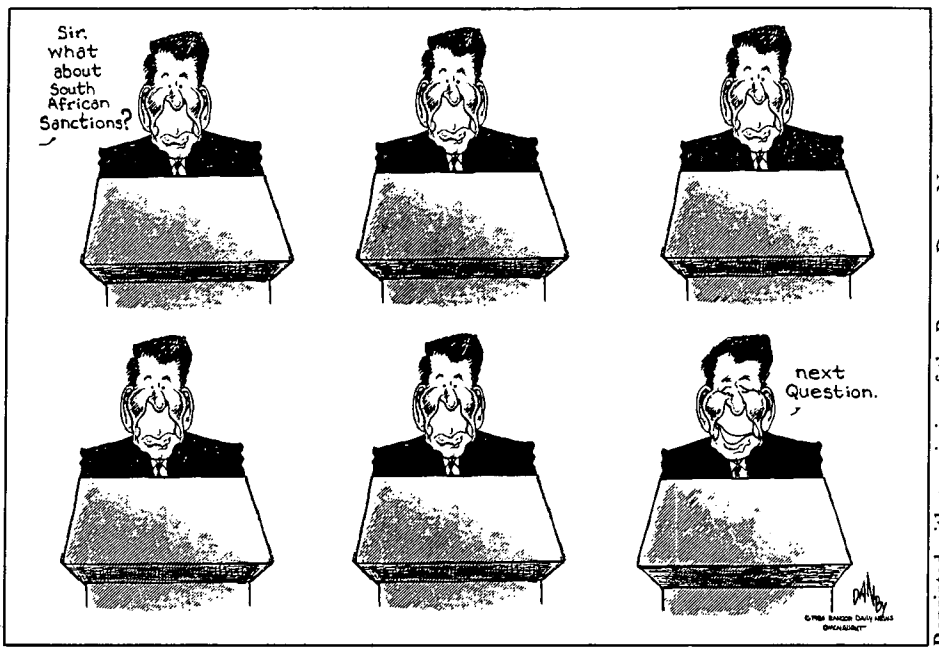
even mentioned by the few remaining liberals in Congress.

Now, there were sectarians—the right is blessed with them as well as the left—who complained that Reagan did not go far enough. David Stockman judged Reagan to be "a consensus politician, not an ideologue." This was a dumb remark, since it has been Reagan's peculiar skill to combine the two roles—consensus politician and ideologue—just as he has put the politics of theater at the service of ideological politics. After all, to be an ideologue doesn't necessarily mean to commit political suicide: as a Washington hand is quoted, "Reagan has never been one to go over a cliff for a cause" (*Newsweek*, April 7, 1986). The shrewder Reaganites understood that if they clung at all costs to their maximum program, they might not even get their minimum. When it comes to political reality, Stockman has nothing to teach Reagan.

BUT THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENT of the Reagan administration has not been institutional or programmatic. It has consisted of a spectacular transformation of popular attitudes, values and styles, though how deep or durable this will prove to be we cannot yet know. In a country where only two decades ago a sizable portion of the population registered distrust of corporate America, the Reaganites have largely succeeded in restoring popular confidence in the virtues of capitalism, the mystical beneficence of "the free market," and the attractiveness of a "minimalist state," even though that state, faithfully attending to corporate needs, has never been close to being minimalist. In the long run, the brilliant manipulation of popular sentiment by Reagan and his men may turn out to be more important than their economic and social enactments.

A certain worldview, not exactly fresh but with some clever decorations, has come to dominate public discourse. Let me try briefly to sift out the main elements of the Reaganite vision.

• *The primacy of "success," the release of greed.* For the segment of Reaganite operatives and backers that came from or represented the new rich of the West and Southwest—real estate developers, oil millionaires, movie magnates, in short the *arriviste bourgeoisie*—the policies of the Reagan administration were immediately helpful. Still more important was the largesse with which these policies sanctioned appetites of acquisitiveness and greed that had been present, of course, before Reagan's presidency but not quite so blatantly or unashamedly. It was as if J.R. had found



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spiritual comrades in the White House, or even an office next door to, say, Michael Deaver. The inner circles of Reaganites and their managerial supporters throughout the country were sublimely untroubled by the cautions of certain skeptics (Felix Rohatyn, for one) in the Eastern financial establishment. Deaver's squalid story —his exploitation of White House connections in behalf of his lobbying firm, with the winking connivance of his old boss—was just a minor instance of the by now commonplace shuttling between high governmental posts, especially in the Pentagon, and corporate board rooms. It will take some years before we know the whole story of this jolly interpenetration between officialdom and corporations, but it takes no gifts of prophecy to foresee that, in its subservience to big money, the Reagan administration is likely to equal or surpass those of Grant and Harding.

The new rich, tasting power and lightheaded with a whiff of ideology, could now have it both ways. They could persuade themselves that it was quite legitimate, indeed "the American way," to grab as much as they could, and "Screw you, Jack," if you suffered the consequences, while they were also morally comforted with the fairy tale that the sum of their selfishness would, through a sleight of "the invisible hand," come out as a public good. The corporate buccaneers who now felt free to act out the ethos of Social Darwinism could also preach that "the free market" brought plenty to all (which didn't, however, keep corporate America from pressing for every form of governmental handout that would further its economic interests). After all, few human experiences can be as satisfying as the simultaneous discharge of low desires and high sentiments.

THE FEVER SPREAD. While industrial America was being devastated and thousands of farmers trembled on the edge of bankruptcy, the corporate and financial "community" indulged in a spree of raids and mergers, almost all of them unproductive, sterile, asocial, but decidedly profitable. New terms entered our language: arbitrage, asset-shuffling, golden parachute, junk bonds, etc. New generations of profiteers, yuppies with clever brains and no minds, flourished in investment banking. A few may end in jail for "insider" trading. *Newsweek* (May 26, 1986) quotes a disillusioned Wall Streeter:

> We have created two myths in the 1980s. One is that you need to be smart to be an investment banker. That's wrong. Finance is easy. Myth number two is that investment bankers somehow create value. They don't. They shuffle around value other people have created. It's a parasitical industry.

Reading about these young Wall Streeters, baby-faced creatures of the Reagan moment, one feels, almost, a kind of pity for them. Caught in illegal maneuvers, which in pleading guilty they now say were known to the top people in their firms, they seem like petty scapegoats, small fry who had not yet learned what the big fellows know: that you can evade the law without breaking it or can make yourself a bundle while remaining just this side of the law since, after all, it's your kind of law.

A PSYCHIATRIST, Samuel Klagsbrun, who treats "a lot of lawyers handling mergers and acquisitions," says that for these people "business is God" (*Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 1986). A young arbitrager reports that everyone

> seems to want to make the quick buck. [They] move out into the left lane, put it into overdrive and hope the brakes don't fail when they hit the first curve. (*Newsweek*, May 26, 1986.)

And more sedately, Ira Sorkin, the New York director of the Securities and Exchange Commission, says, "Greed knows no bounds. There's always someone who makes more than you do. Investment banking is the new gold mine." (*New York Times*, June 2, 1986.)

Earning around a million dollars a year, some of these arbitragers and deal-makers live by a scale of values that can only repel Americans who still keep a fraction of the republic's animating values. Here is Hamilton James, 35, of the firm Donaldson Lupkin, who shovels in over a million a year but says that "if we [his family] want a library and a room for an *au pair* girl, it could cost a couple million dollars. If it's anything fancy, four or five million." (*Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 1986.) Any bets on what he'll pay the *au pair* girl?

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NONE OF THIS IS NEW. There were Drew and Fisk, Morgan and Rockefeller in the days of and after the robber barons. There were the boys of Teapot Dome. There was Calvin Coolidge who declared, "The business of America is business." There was Charlie Wilson who said, "What's good for General Motors is good for the United States." Yet something *is* new, at least for the years since 1933, and that's the social and moral sanction that Reaganism has given to the ethos of greed. The Reagan administration did not "cause" the Wall Street shenanigans I've mentioned; Reagan himself need not say, like Richard Nixon, "I am not a crook," since no one supposes he is; but the bent of his policy, the tone of his rhetoric, the signals of his response have all enabled, indeed encouraged, the atmosphere of greed.

A few years ago our national heroes were men like Jonas Salk and Martin Luther King and Walter Reuther, but now it's an industrial manager like Lee Iacocca, of Pinto fame, whose book is supposed to show even morons how to become millionaires. Iacocca stars in a television commercial that wonderfully articulates the spirit of the times: he strides through a factory in heroic style, blaring out the virtues of his product, while behind him follow a group of auto workers, mute and cheerful, happy with the beneficence of Lee the First.

• *The lure of an earlier America, or the corruptions of nostalgia.* Whether intuitively or by calculation, the Reaganites grasped how deeply the collective imagination of this country responded to "pictures" of an earlier, often mythic America—"pictures" of small towns, rugged personal virtues, family stability, and sturdy yeomen cultivating their own farms. The less such "pictures" correspond to social reality, the greater their appeal, for it is obviously more pleasant to reflect upon the America of Franklin and Jefferson than that of Exxon and IBM. And while much of this pastoral nostalgia is manipulated by political hucksters, who have apparently learned something from the commercials of Marlboro cigarettes and Busch beer, there is still, it is important to remember, something authentic being exploited here, a memory prettied up and sweetened but a genuine memory nonetheless.

Badly shaken by Watergate, the Vietnam War, and the countercultural excesses of the late 1960s, many Americans have come to yearn for a return to "traditional values," even if that return was being sponsored politically by a *nouveau riche* class which in its pinched little heart aspired most of all to conspicuous consumption. In any case, we are paying now for the crude anti-Americanism, the feckless nose-thumbing and flag-burning that marked a good part of the counterculture in the late 1960s. We are paying for its insensitivity to native speech and sentiment, an insensitivity that, strangely, is itself part of American tradition. Much of the Reaganite reaction, though eventuating in concrete socioeconomic policies, drew upon feelings of hurt and outrage that were held by people not necessarily reactionaries or even conservatives. These feelings were exploited skillfully; many of us on the left quite underestimated the power of vague, incantatory appeals to "tradition"—just as we also warned, to little avail, that the hijinks of "the young" in the late 1960s would be paid for later by the workers, the poor, women, and minorities.

WE LIVE IN A CURIOUSLY MIXED SITUATION. On the one hand, a managed passivity, submission to television captions, apparent indifference to social suffering, political chicanery, and a blundering president—the expected elements of a "mass society." On the other hand, strong new popular movements that mobilize previously silent segments of the population to struggle over issues like abortion, prayer in the schools, the death penalty, etc. Such movements are hardly symptoms of a "mass society"; they represent a shrewd appropriation by the right of methods and energies through which labor and liberals helped create a (sort of) welfare state.

Fundamentalism is familiar enough in American history, but the political energies and moral virulence characterizing it today may be rather new. When lined with religious passion and cast as agent of traditional values, right-wing politics takes on a formidable strength—ornamented with such fawning testimonials as William Buckley's comparison of Nancy Reagan with the Pietà.

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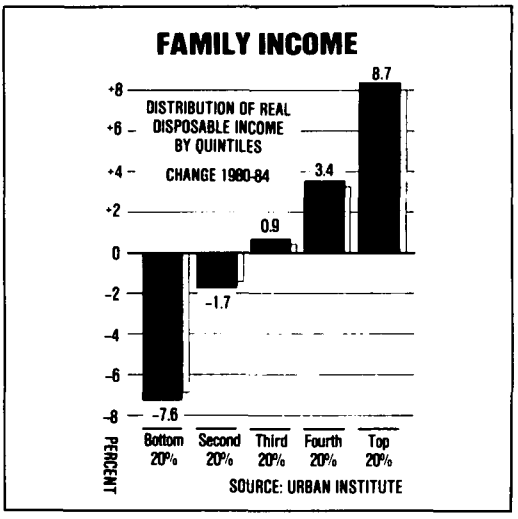
Pastoral nostalgia, individualist appeals, traditional values, religious fervor—it is the mixture of all these into one stream of collective sentiment that the Reaganites have managed. And up to a point it has worked: many Americans do "feel better about their country," if only because they have a president who says what they wish to hear. One reason this intellectual scam has worked is that so far, with perhaps the exception of Mario Cuomo, no political leader in the opposition has grasped emotionally the power of native speech and symbol. If, as I believe, we are paying for the irresponsibility of the countercultural left, we are also paying for the desiccation of liberalism, which in the figure of Jimmy Carter was reduced to a technological cipher.

It would be foolhardy in a few pages to try to sort out the many strands of American individualism, still one of the strongest components of national myth and belief.* The Reaganites do have some claim upon this tradition: there is a clear line of descent from a corrupted late Emersonianism to the "rugged individualism" of Herbert Hoover to the "possessive individualism" of today (to possess: to grab). But the right has no historical ground for the *exclusiveness* of its claim within the American individualist tradition. There is, in reality, no single tradition; there is only an interweaving of many elements in complex, confused, and often contradictory ways. If individualism has often been used to justify economic depredation, it has also provided support to social critics standing alone, and independently, against government and mob, from the Mexican to the Vietnam Wars. What is sad is that, through a default of will and imagination, the speech and symbols of individualism have been allowed to fall into the hands of the right.

• *The power of ideology (or: in America a little goes a long way).* Reagan's most effective slogan has been "Get the government off our backs." It appeals to Americans who, feeling more and more helpless as employees or clients of corporate giants, transfer their frustrations



Reprinted from *Building* America's Future (Detroit, Mich.: United Auto Workers of America, 1985).

to "the bureaucrats." It appeals to Americans whose small businesses have been squeezed or destroyed by giant competitors. It appeals to Americans bewildered by the merger mania, known in earlier days as the concentration of capital. But above all, it appeals to the executives and managers of Big Business whose institutions were rescued from probable collapse by the welfare state but who never reconciled themselves to the agents of their rescue, and who now feel free to release their yearning for the good old days of "rugged individualism" and union busting.

Sensible people know that the talk about getting the government out of economic life has not led to a significant decline in government intervention in the economy. Indeed, it could not. It has only changed, in a reactionary direction, the social character and goals of government intervention. The policies of the Federal Reserve Board constitute a major intervention into economic life. The readiness of the federal government to bail out Lockheed, Chrysler, and Penn Central is quite as decisive an intervention as a program, if there were one, to help bankrupt farmers and create jobs for the unemployed. As John Kenneth Galbraith tartly observes, "Senator Jesse Helms stands staunchly and rhetorically for the free market and for a uniquely rigorous quota and licensing system for the tobacco producers (or landowners) who help to assure his election." (*New York Review of Books*, June 26, 1986.)

*I have tried to do this in a recent little book *The American Newness: Culture and Politics in the Age of Emerson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

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ABOUT ONE THING WE CAN BE QUITE CERTAIN: the interpenetration of state and society, government and economy is an inescapable fact of modern life. Serious conservatives know this. Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Richard Darman says in a moment of candor: "We've been in the business of economic planning as long as we've been in the business of practical politics" (*New Republic*, May 5, 1986). The only question, but a big one, is whether the government's economic role will be progressive or regressive.

Exposing the cant about "getting the government off our backs," while necessary, is not likely to suffice. For the ideology behind such talk does speak to certain realities: the visible bureaucratization of large institutions, whether private corporations or segments of the state. But this ideology does not speak honestly or realistically to these facts of modern life. Nevertheless, especially when fused with nostalgia for American individualism, this ideological gambit is going to be effective, at least until put to the test of crisis—What can it say to continued high unemployment, the increasing poverty of even these boom years?—as well as to the test of deceitful practice. What credence does the "free market" rhetoric of a Jesse Helms merit when set against his insistence on government privileges for his tobacco constituency?

The ideology of a reclaimed *laissez-faire* is having a "run" in some parts of the industrialized world, especially because of social democratic and liberal inadequacies, though only in the United States and Great Britain has it had a modest economic success. The battle between advocates and opponents of the welfare state—which, like it or not, today has greater political urgency than an abstract counterposition between capitalism and socialism—will continue to the end of this century. But meanwhile there are some new ideological wrinkles.

THE CORPORATIONS HAVE DISCOVERED the importance of ideas, or at least the manipulation of ideas. Some nine or ten years ago I noticed, in one of those institutional ads that corporations print on the *New York Times* op ed page, a quotation from the literary critic Lionel Trilling. This struck me as a turning point in intellectual life, or at least in our public relations, coming as it did only a few years after some writers had proclaimed "the end of ideology." In the last decade, under the shrewd guardianship of the neoconservative intellectuals—who offer their thoughts to the corporations, though not for free, not for free—corporate America has discovered the pragmatic uses of ideology, the importance of entering intellectual debate, and consequently has poured millions into foundations, magazines, conferences. Mobil and Exxon, borrowing apparently from the pages of the *Public Interest*, offer solemn essays on political economy; the investment house of Shearson Lehman flashes snappy statements on television about the virtues of capitalism. Credit for enticing the corporations into ideological battle must go in part to Irving Kristol, who has made himself into a sort of backroom broker between the corporations and the Republican party on one hand and some available intellectuals on the other. He has taught American businessmen, at least some of them, the elementary lesson that social struggle takes place, perhaps most of all, in people's heads and that just as dropping some change into the cultural programs of public broadcasting helps create an "aura," so the interests of the business community may be served by subsidizing magazines like the *New Criterion* and the *Public Interest*, as well as the network of institutes, committees, foundations, and journals in which the neocons flourish.

There are times, however, when our corporate leaders forget all the babble about social responsibility and lapse into mere truth. Here is John Akers, chief executive of IBM, on divesting in South Africa: "If we elect to leave, it will be a business decision. . . . We are not in business to conduct moral activity. We are not in business to conduct socially responsible action. We are in business to conduct business." (*New York Times*, April 23, 1986.) One can almost hear Kristol gently remonstrating: Yes, yes, John, but do you have to *say* it?

• *The war whoop of chauvinism.* Shrewdly seizing upon a popular reaction against the often vulgar and mindless anti-Americanism of the late 1960s, the Reagan administration has succeeded partly in blotting out memories of

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Population Category	Percent of Total National Income Received	Comparison to Past Percentages
Poorest two-fifths of all families	15.7%	Lowest percentage recorded since the data collection began in 1947.
Middle fifth of all families	17.0	Lowest percentage recorded (since 1947).
Wealthiest two-fifths of all families	67.3	Highest percentage recorded (since 1947).

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1984. August 1985.*

the disastrous and destructive American intervention in Vietnam. A new national mood has been programmed. It's symbolized, half in myth, half in parody, by Rambo. It is released in the vulgar, unsportsmanlike displays at the Los Angeles Olympics. It is embodied, more fiercely, in the indefensible Reaganite policy of intervening in Nicaragua. And it is raised to a pitch of madness in the Star Wars program (which E.P. Thompson has shrewdly described as an instance of American "individualism" gone berserk . . . the lone cowboy now ascending the heavens to clean up the rustlers). This new national mood draws upon two contradictory emotions held with about equal intensity: first, everybody has been kicking poor little America around; and second, we're the strongest country in the world (as was proved once and for all in Grenada) and we're going to straighten things out, even if we have to call in John Wayne to help out Ron.

II

A consequence of these transformations in public discourse has been a debasement in the social tone of American life, the texture of shared feelings, the unspoken impulses and biases. About such things one can only speak impressionistically, but we all recognize them. They strike upon our nerves. We are living in a moment of moral smallness, a curdling of generosity, a collapse of idealism. I don't mean to suggest that most ordinary Americans have become morally bad, of course not; only that the moral styles, the tones of speech and qualities of symbol which this administration and its journalistic and intellectual allies encourage are pinched and narrow-spirited and sometimes downright mean.

How else do you explain the readiness of a 35-year-old arbitrager publicly to say that adding "a library and a room for the *au pair* girl" would come to four or five million dollars—and this at a time when thousands of New Yorkers had no homes last winter? This chap might have felt the same way about housing costs at an earlier moment, but he would have been too cautious or ashamed to say it. Now, in the Reagan era, it's acceptable. Or for that matter, how else do you explain that someone like Ed Koch can gain favor through a smirking double-talk that shows the folks in front of the tube how to put down blacks without quite saying so.

To live under an administration that featured such notables as James Watt and Rita Lavelle; in which the attorney general declares poverty in America to be merely "anecdotal" and the president himself (ignoring massive evidence, some of it accumulated by his own administration), announces that people go hungry in America only if they lack information on how to get help; in which the head of the Civil Rights Commission is part Uncle Tom and part, it seems, huckster; in which the president dares to compare the Somocista *contras*, some of them proven killers, with Washington and Jefferson—is to recall again the force of Brecht's sentence about another (still more) evil time: "He who laughs has not yet heard the terrible tidings."

The favored tone of worldly, or sometimes macho, indifference to the plight of the jobless and the homeless cuts through the whole range

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of the people in power and their intellectual allies. The sensibilities of the country's elites, all those who make policy and shape opinion, harden. We see it in the systematic refusal of the Reagan administration even to consider programs that would provide jobs for the unemployed; in the steady deterioration of OSHA-determined work safety regulations in factories; in the disdain lining even the surface of official policy toward blacks; in the steady efforts of the civil rights division of the Justice Department to sabotage affirmative action; in the surrender of the Koch administration in New York City to luxury developers; in the admiration shown a guntoter like Bernhard Goetz; in the mere fact that a rag like the *New York Post* can survive.*

III

How deep and durable is this shift in public sentiment? Will the rightward turn continue after Reagan? For that matter, *is* there a turn to the right? A not-very-profound article in the *Atlantic* (May 1986) argues that there has not been one. Its authors, Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, produce an array of poll results showing that majorities of respondents still favor many of the programs associated with liberalism. How then, you may wonder, did Reagan manage to get reelected? Simple, conclude our authors: the economic situation got better and most people vote their pocketbooks.

This would be comforting if true, but at the very least it requires complication. If a majority of Americans favor liberal measures yet a majority of voters chose Reagan, doesn't this suggest that the appeal of the president and his slogans was deeper, more telling than any (perhaps fading or residual or formal) attachment to liberal programs? The polls do not measure *intensity* of commitment, or which of two conflicting sets of opinions held simultaneously may be the stronger. Evidently, for many Americans the appeal of Reagan and at least some of what he represents was stronger than the attachment to welfare-state measures. And that would seem to signify a shift to the right, would it not?

I don't claim to know how strong or lasting this shift will prove to be. It's quite possible that the Democrats will score victories in the 1986 congressional elections and may even win the presidency in 1988. But that would not necessarily demonstrate that there has been no important shift to the right or that we are enjoying a turn back toward liberalism. One need only look at the dominant style of opinion within the Democratic party to see that the rightward shift has all but overcome those who are supposed to resist it. (The code word is "pragmatic.") The very tone of the opposition, such as it is, which the leading Democrats adopt seems clear evidence that the Reaganites have come to control the political turf—which means, above all, to set the terms of the debate. Liberal proposals are virtually invisible at the Democratic top. When was the last time that even Senator Kennedy spoke out in favor of his once-featured project of a national health bill? Or that any of the leading Democrats remem-

*A small example, though repulsive enough. In the *New York Post* (September 24, 1985) Norman Podhoretz (editor of *Commentary*, a magazine sponsored by the American Jewish Committee) had a peculiarly brutish article on AIDS. He argued against the demand that the Reagan administration "undertake a crash program to develop a vaccine" to prevent AIDS. In short, just as he had previously attacked the administration for not being jingoistic enough in foreign policy, he now undercut it for having "rushed to accommodate this fantastic demand." If only homosexuals would give up their "buggery," the problem of AIDS would soon be solved. (Podhoretz, a military strategist, is also a medical authority.) And he ends with a cry of anguish: Are the politicians "aware that in the name of compassion they are giving social sanction to what can only be described as brutish degradation?" That human beings, whatever their earlier deviation from the strict morals Podhoretz would enforce, are dying from this disease and therefore require *help*, is a consideration that nowhere enters Podhoretz's argument.

It's interesting to note that a legal opinion drafted by lawyers in the civil rights division of the Justice Department (not exactly a hot-bed of radicalism) "tentatively concluded that people with AIDS are 'handicapped individuals' entitled to protection under the federal civil rights law." (*New York Times*, June 8, 1986.) From the point of view of Podhoretz's new fundamentalist morality, this conclusion was sheer romanticism.

Since writing this footnote I have come across a report (*New York Times*, June 28, 1986) that "*Heterosexual* intercourse is now the predominant route of the spread of AIDS in Haiti. . . ." (emphasis added). In light of this news, one awaits further guidance as to sexual morality from the editor of *Commentary*.

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bered the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act? Except in their response to Reagan's outrageous feeler about canceling SALT II, the posture of the leading Democrats is defensive—or worse still, acquiescent, as when Senator Bradley votes for aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

America is a volatile country and it's possible that we are indeed moving to the sort of sharp break in public sentiment, this time a turn away from Reaganism, that has occurred three or four times since World War II. But if anything of the sort happens, it will be a *sharp* break. Meanwhile, we'd better give the devil his due if we want to resist his doings.

IV

Few things about the national condition are more depressing than the collapse of American liberalism. To recall Lionel Trilling's once-famous remark of the 1950s—that in America liberalism is the only viable political tradition—is to thrust oneself back into another world. In the face of the Reaganite victory, the organizational and ideological collapse of American liberalism has been astonishing. Hardly a politician dares acknowledge himself to be a liberal, the very word itself having come to seem a political handicap.*

Of the older intellectual spokesmen for liberalism, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and John Kenneth Galbraith are still heard from on occasion, but they are understandably intent upon writing their own books and perhaps, again understandably, are weary of polemic. Schlesinger advances a consoling theory—consoling if true—about the periodicity of American politics, according to which the next swing of the pendulum will bring us happily back to liberalism (but why *must* the pendulum keep swinging?). Galbraith aims his neatly ironic shafts against Reaganomics, but with a world-weariness that seems to despair of ever again striking a blow that will tell. This style becomes annoying when it tempts him into cozy good-fellowship with William Buckley, a reactionary snob who merits no more than the coolest of civility. As for other social analysts who defend liberal measures and values—writers like Robert Kuttner, Barbara Ehrenreich, Michael Harrington, Robert Reich, Jeff Faux, etc.—they are mostly spokesmen for the democratic left who have been forced, in these trying times, to pick up the slack of liberalism. What might be called mainstream liberalism seems quite unable to attract talented new advocates who can speak to audiences beyond the confines of the academy.

There is room at the moment for an aggressive liberal journal that would rally scattered cohorts, freshen up received wisdom and venture on new ideas, and enter into intellectual combat. I don't, however, see such a journal. The *Nation* is mired in the fellow-traveling causes and symbols of yesterday's Popular Front (Hiss, the Rosenbergs, etc.). The *New Republic* prints many cogent liberal pieces on domestic subjects, but—it almost depends on which week you open it—also many swaggering neoconservative pieces, especially on foreign policy. Its editors have evidently chosen to make their magazine an arena for conflict, a forum for debate, which is a plausible option but does not enable a coherent, yet open-spirited, advocacy of a resurgent liberalism.

Why, one wonders, has American liberalism suffered so severe a decline? That there should have been losses; that the usual crew of opportunists should desert; that veterans would grow tired and step aside—all to be expected. But so utter a rout? Is it possible, as some writers of the sectarian left have said, that liberalism in America has "exhausted itself?" A full answer to this question will have to wait for others, but here let me note a few possible causes for the unhappy state of American liberalism.

FUNDAMENTALLY, I'D SUGGEST, we have been witnessing the all-but-inevitable disintegration which affects every party or movement that

*How dismal the current state of the Democratic liberals is I came to realize only after reading a major new history of the New Deal years, Kenneth Davis's *FDR: The New Deal Years 1933-1937*. Davis makes clear that when Roosevelt first took office, one of his major problems (as he saw it) was to ward off a strong liberal thrust in Congress—for instance, a bill by Senator Hugo Black of Alabama to enact a 30-hour week. Can you imagine any liberal more than a half century later introducing such a bill in Congress? There were figures like La Follette of Wisconsin and Norris of Nebraska who represented an old-fashioned militant progressivism of which we may well be envious today.

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has held power for a length of time. Success breeds complacency, obtuseness and corruption, and these in turns make for an incapacity to see, let alone confront, the problems created by success. As long as the American economy was expanding and Keynesian prescriptions were more or less working, New Deal liberalism and its offshoots could retain some vitality. But once they had to confront problems no longer soluble through the by-now conventional New Deal measures—problems like the Vietnam War, Third-World eruptions (Iran), the radical transformation of the world economy, new productive techniques, inflation, etc.—liberalism fell apart. The time had come for policies of a social democratic slant but these an increasingly insecure liberalism would not approach. The comforts of office, the fears of yesterday's innovators before the risks of tomorrow's innovations: all disabled American liberalism.

Where in the 1930s liberalism was at least in part based on mass movements, notably the trade unions, and could claim a large popular suffrage, by the 1970s it had narrowed into an electoral apparatus or "political class" getting on in years and too much at ease with itself and its received ideas. By contrast, it should in honesty be said, at least some conservatives tried to engage in programmatic thought, speculating in their newly-developed think tanks on the problems and contradictions, some contingent but others perhaps fundamental, of the welfare state in a capitalist economy. (That the welfare state might have inherent contradictions was an idea that rarely, if ever, surfaced in liberal thought.) After a time, the once-magical names of Roosevelt and Kennedy lost their glamor, new generations appeared that had little interest in the past and less capacity for memory. Liberalism, once at least occasionally linked with social insurgency, now came to be identified with a troubled status quo: a government that had dragged us into an indefensible war in Vietnam and by the mid-1970s was encountering economic difficulties (stagflation, unemployment) for which it knew no remedies.

The bureaucratization of liberalism, perhaps an unavoidable cost of its success, also meant that it came increasingly to depend on the intervention of the judiciary, especially on such difficult matters as school busing; and this too contributed to the decline of its popular base. As liberalism lost its charge of innovative energy, the conservative movement appropriated

Supply-Side Fantasies

I am impatient to see the reply of the supply-siders to a little-noticed report by Citizens for Tax Justice, which tracked the performance of corporations as they basked in Reaganite fiscal forbearances. C.T.J. found that there was an inverse relation between companies maximizing tax breaks and companies making new investments in plants and employment.

Between 1981, when Reaganism took the glove off the invisible hand, and 1984, some forty-four companies at the top of the league, which among them shared $2.1 billion of tax rebate money, declared $53.6 billion in pre-tax domestic profits and paid no tax at all. They received not so much a tax holiday as an outright subsidy from taxpayers. Over the same period, these same forty-four companies reduced their aggregate capital spending by 4 percent and their labor forces by 6 percent. That average is misleading for several important cases. For example, Boeing paid no taxes, cut its capital spending by 38 percent and reduced its payroll by 18 percent. Dow Chemical let its investment decline by 34 percent and its work force by 13 percent. Equivalent figures for I.T.T. were 30 percent and 25 percent.

This contrasts, to say the least, with the boastful predictions made in 1981 by David Stockman's Office of Management and Budget, and by the United States Chamber of Commerce. Stockman, we always knew, was fantasizing—we hardly needed his self-important confirmation of the fact—but the Chamber of Commerce people and the host of supply-side propagandists seem at least to have believed their own line. They promised a rise in business investment of 11 percent per annum, adjusted for inflation, from 1981 through 1986. The truth is that where investment has risen, it has been among companies that consider themselves taxpayers. The ones that took the breaks did only that. So that such investment increase as there has been is not attributable to the supply-side nostrum.

Christopher Hitchens
THE NATION, May 17, 1986 □

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many of the techniques of liberalism's earlier, more heroic days. For what the conservatives now undertook to do, and in part succeeded in doing, was to build articulate popular constituencies.

With Jimmy Carter's victory in 1976, the disintegration of American liberalism quickened. A tradition that in the past had at least partly drawn upon social idealism and popular commitment now dwindled into the outlook of an intelligent technocrat. As the political scientists celebrated the ascendency of "pragmatism" (a term that relieves many people of the need for thinking), another triumph was in preparation, that of the ideologically-aroused Reaganites.

To these notes it's worth adding a few words about liberal failures of leadership. In 1968 Eugene McCarthy, having lost his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, still enjoyed a substantial following of ardent young people. Had he been a serious political leader rather than a gifted dilettante eager to flaunt his cultural credentials, he might have kept his following and played a role in our time as oppositional spokesman somewhat like that which Robert La Follette played in the early 1920s. As it was, McCarthy petulantly resigned his Senate seat, left his followers high and dry, and speedily entered oblivion. Walter Mondale, a decent but not very strong figure, chose—until the last few weeks of his campaign, by which time it was too late—to run for the presidency as a hesitant compromiser hoping to minimize his earlier associations with liberalism. That an aggressive and principled liberal effort would have brought him victory is doubtful; but that a timorous and unfocused retreat from liberalism must bring defeat is all too clear.

Well, then, is liberalism "exhausted"—not for the moment but historically, finally? Is it being swept off the historical stage, as dogmatists of right and left gleefully assert? If so, the situation of the American left, precarious enough already, is far worse than we might suppose, for every lesson of American history teaches us, I believe, that the left in America flourishes mostly during the times when liberalism flourishes. In any case, it is clearly probable that a collapse of liberalism will benefit the right far more than the left.

We ought to be skeptical about theories of liberalism's "exhaustion," if only because they bear an embarrassing resemblance to earlier, dubious theories about capitalism's "inevitable collapse." American liberalism at its best has a rich tradition: a worldview devoted to political freedom, pluralist ways of life, and programs for social change. This liberalism has seen bad times, but found itself again; some of its leading figures have yielded to shoddy deals, others have stood firm by first principles. In bad shape right now, it could regain cogency if it were to confront socioeconomic problems more complex, and requiring more radical answers, than those of the New Deal era. Neither success nor failure is ordained: men and women still make their history, at least some of it.

V

In first sketching out this article, I had planned a section here about the intellectuals and Reaganism. But there's not much to say about this, beyond noticing what has already been noticed—that American intellectuals are scattered and dispersed, no longer forming any sort of coherent force, let alone being able to act as an "adversary culture," or critics of established power. So let me just offer a few notes on recent happenings:

• The one disciplined intellectual group that, under Reagan, has a modest access to power, is the neoconservatives. There's something grotesquely comic, almost Dickensian, about these people. They have more political influence today than any other intellectuals, but they indulge in more self-pity also, complaining about being outside of, and scorned by, the cultural "establishment." By that I suppose they mean certain magazines like the *New York Review of Books*. But when it comes to real influence and even power—the ability to mold policy in the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the *New York Times* and even, partly, the State Department—the neoconservatives are doing rather well for themselves. And this, quite apart from their plushy connections with foundations, magazines, corporations, etc.

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Yet they feel unloved. Indeed, they think of themselves as a beleaguered minority guarding the pass against spineless liberals who are preparing the downfall of Western civilization. It's as if they needed to keep alive the psychology of their radical past and now to link it with the politics of the far right—a rather unsavory combination.

The neoconservatives have developed a "theory," as odd as it is groundless, according to which leftist and liberal critics of Western bourgeois democracies are guilty of the dark sin of "equivalence," that is, of believing that the two great blocs, the Western and the Soviet, are equally oppressive and equally to be opposed. Now, no sensible person believes anything of the sort; any critic of social arrangements in, say, Reagan's America or Thatcher's England who has a gram of brains and isn't besotted with Trotskyist formulas of 1937, knows quite well that the evil of totalitarian societies, whether Soviet or otherwise, is qualitatively different from, that is, worse than, that of the West. What such critics believe is simply that if, as the neoconservatives say, the right to criticize in the West is a precious one—which, of course, it is—then it is a right that improves with intelligent use.

The neocons want, so to say, the sensations of affluent apocalypse. As long as they can alarm themselves with fairy tales about "equivalence," they can also persuade themselves that, their visible prosperity notwithstanding, they are fighting a desperate last-ditch defense for freedom. Which in practice comes down to assaulting anyone who ventures to exercise the rights of criticism that the neocons praise as the blessing of democracy. *Love it but don't use it*, is their slogan.

I SUSPECT THEIR MOMENT HAS PEAKED. A few years ago they were helpful to the Reaganites, providing them with the theoretical gifts of Jeane Kirkpatrick; but can you imagine what some of the boys in the White House say to Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams when they read an attack by Abrams's father-in-law, Norman Podhoretz, on the pusillanimous policies of Reagan in the Cold War? ("Hey, Elliot, is your wife's old man off his nut? Does he really want to get us into a war?") Month by month the neoconservative organs, especially *Commentary*, have been driven by some inner fury, almost a kind of madness—we saw the same thing in the late 1960s with certain New Left journals—to keep raising the ante by making increasingly wild and indiscriminate attacks on anyone suspect of liberal heresy and radical sin: which means not only predictable targets like Mike Harrington and me, but relatively innocent figures like the Italian novelist Primo Levi and the American sociologist Paul Starr. A purism of destructiveness is at work here which afflicts all extremist groups, right and left. And the result is likely to be a grand climax of self-destruction. Poof—and the far-out segments of the New Left were gone, consumed in their own rage. The one thing that might save the neocons from this fate is the big money behind them. But how long will it remain there?

• Most intellectuals are, more or less, against Reaganism, but there has been remarkably little concerted opposition to it in those areas of public life that are or should be especially important to intellectuals: e.g., educational policy, cultural institutions, etc. One dominant style of intellectual, or at least literary, life these past several years has been a self-contented hermeticism of theory—sometimes, and this really is bizarre, in the form of a congealed academic Marxism (once it wanted to change the world, now to change the methodology).

One of the saddest aspects of recent intellectual life has been an all-but-universal indifference to the defeats suffered by American labor and the worsening conditions of the American working class. Pick up any leading intellectual journal and you will find critiques of Reaganite policy in Nicaragua or Star Wars, but barely a peep about what has been happening to the unions and the workers in them. Granted that the leadership of the AFL–CIO doesn't always quicken hearts; still, you would suppose that intellectuals, supposedly endowed with historical memories, would remember something about the role of the unions in creating our semi-welfare state, perhaps even remember the no doubt delusionary but not entirely unworthy feelings that intellectuals had about the working class a few decades ago. Even to mention

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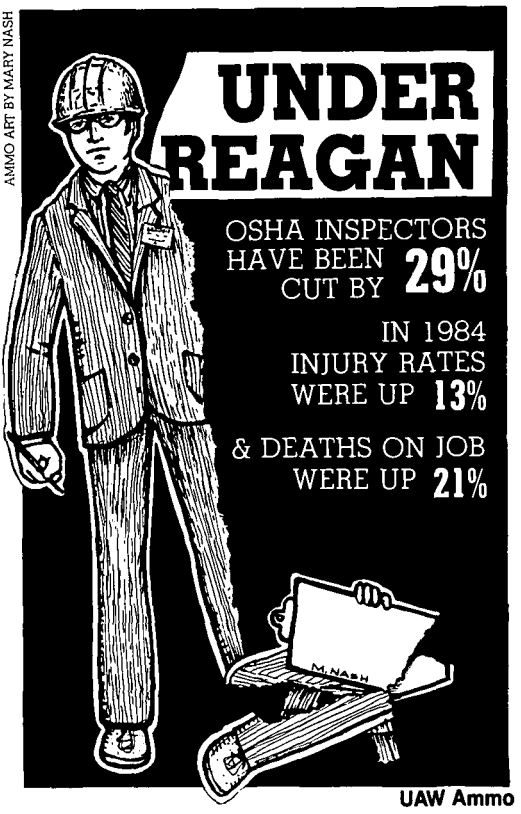
such a matter—at a time when we could be discussing the finer points of theoretical conjunctures and phallocentrism—is to call down upon oneself the charge of being old-fashioned. And, in this culture, what could be worse?

• Perhaps inevitably, there occur in times of reaction small adaptations, failures of memory. Two examples, both venial, neither world-shaking, yet symptomatic:

At the recent PEN Congress Normal Mailer invites as a major speaker Secretary of State George Shultz, architect (or developer) of Reagan's Nicaraguan policy. Does this mean that Mailer approves of this policy? Of course not. But would the Mailer of the late 1960s, who thought *Dissent* wasn't radical enough, have extended such an invitation?

At the same PEN Congress Saul Bellow, a writer of sensitivity who may well remember what it was that drove us in our youth to radical criticism, got involved in a debate with Günter Grass. Replying to Grass's charge that he had ignored or minimized the magnitude of poverty in a speech he had delivered at the congress, Bellow said: "I did not say there are no pockets of poverty. I did not say this is a land of full justice." He was merely trying to say that "by and large" America is "an example of prosperity." Well, yes, in part it is. But consider also that phrase "pockets of poverty." If writers are right in telling us that language reveals our deepest biases, then it is worth stopping over that phrase. For this is a phrase of evasion, the euphemism of apologists for the status quo, it is the language of those who gloss over the reality of millions of people living in poverty and millions of others (some near to Bellow's own Chicago) who have worked in basic industries and are now having their lives torn up. Bellow need only glance at some of the boxes in this issue of *Dissent* to learn about those "pockets of poverty."


AMMO ART BY MARY NASH
UNDER REAGAN
OSHA INSPECTORS HAVE BEEN CUT BY 29%
IN 1984 INJURY RATES WERE UP 13%
& DEATHS ON JOB WERE UP 21%
M.NASH
UAW Ammo

VI

Criticism and more criticism—that's the need of the moment, the need for tomorrow. Criticism of an administration that exalts greed and ignores need. Criticism of military chauvinism. Criticism of all those who, in the name of an abstract equality, would deny blacks a few steps toward equality through affirmative action. Criticism of every deal or accord with authoritarian dictatorships. And criticism of "our side" too, of the sluggishness of portions of the labor movement, of the collapse of the hopes raised by the French Socialists, of the intellectual drabness of much social democracy.

One needn't be a socialist to engage in such criticism. On some matters, such as the environment, not being a socialist may even render the criticism more effective. But to scan our society from the perspective of democratic socialism offers at least this advantage: it enables a deep-going criticism of the imbalances of wealth and power in our corporate-dominated society, so that we can see those imbalances not as mere blemishes but as injustices built into the very structure of capitalist economy. Perhaps not an advantage in the immediate tactical sense, but very much so for serious intellectual work.

Even if the criticism is not as "fundamental" as we might like, let it be heard. Let people of determination, steady workers with some humor and no fanaticism, keep saying: "This is not what America is supposed to be, this is not how human beings should live." And then—then we will see. □

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Debora Silverman

China at Bloomingdale's and the Met

Vreeland's Allure & Reagan's Political Culture

This article forms the first chapter of Debora Silverman's Selling Culture. *In her introduction, Silverman writes that she wishes to depict a broad "movement of aristocratic invocation in 1980s American culture, whose participants combined representatives from the worlds of the museum, the department store, fashion design, and the media." Such cultural projects, she continues, "are tied to the big business of illusion-making and are perfectly suited to the politics of theater practiced in the White House." We regret that we can here offer only one chapter of this fascinating book.*—Eds.

In September 1980 Bloomingdale's announced it had "unleashed the largest merchandising venture ever in the history of the store" by transporting the riches of China to New York. Advertisements declared that now consumers could travel to China without a passport. Embark on the journey to the East Side, urged the ads in the *New York Times*; in Bloomingdale's one can experience the "sights, sounds, smells and scents of China." The entire premises of the Lexington Avenue store were transformed into a vision of an opulent, hieratic China, land of emperors, mystery, and dazzling artisans feeding the emperors' relentless needs for magnificence. The outside of Bloomingdale's was bedecked with the banners representing the ancient Chinese martial arts: sabers and their exquisitely crafted blade cases. Inside the store's capacious halls, numerous veneered black and red screens were erected, turning the open space into a multiplicity of small, intimate compartments resembling a maze of shiny black boxes. Here the glistening "baubles, bangles, and bedazzling things" of China, as they were called, were displayed. Among the varied objects bombarding the spectator-buyer with their shimmering surfaces were gold and jade bracelets, cinnabar bowls and plates, multicolored woven shawls, coral and garnet boxes, and short jackets and long robes shot through with gold threads, silks, and sequins.

The Chinese imports offered at the re-created Bloomingdale's were presented in the store's display information and in ads in three ways: as timeless, aristocratic, and rare. Each of the three characteristics reflected the peculiar selectivity with which Bloomingdale's marketers fashioned their image of the People's Republic. Bloomingdale's China was a prerevolutionary and preindustrial China, whose luxury artisans practiced the traditions, unbroken, of the emperors. It was a civilization construed as particularly gifted in the creation of delicate, artistic objects for intimate pleasures.

From the forthcoming book *Selling Culture* by Debora Silverman. Copyright © 1986 by Debora Silverman. To be published by Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

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The metahistorical quality of Chinese civilization came through in the Bloomingdale's ads celebrating the "country steeped in forty centuries of opulence and ritual," whose "richness, mystery, and romance were barely touched since Marco Polo's journey seven hundred years ago." And in display cases, placards identified the "ancient craft of lacquer" and the "timeless weavers' art." The promotion literature also stressed that Bloomingdale's buyers, who spent months in China looking for merchandise, had performed an invaluable service for the Chinese people. The buyers' "tireless tracking," patient "sifting," and relentless efforts had led to the rediscovery of Chinese craft treasures, hidden from the public in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. From the "warehouses, back alleys, and small markets" in China, Bloomingdale's had rescued the essence of Chinese culture and was offering it as booty to gentrified New Yorkers.

Gone were the days when China was inseparable from Maoist uniforms, the monochrome caps and jackets beloved of the 1960s American counterculture. The uniformity of Mao's blues was replaced by the extravagant irregularity of ancient nobilities. The imperial tone was set by the sabers adorning the outer walls of the store. Inside, the store placards promised the "most spectacular dynasty of dazzlers this side of Peking." The dynastic dazzlers included woven rugs, "prerevolutionary pieces, each and every one"; coats and robes modeled on the magnificent handmade robes worn by the emperors; cloisonné jewelry that reproduced the styles of the Ch'ing dynasty; cinnabar tableware and boxes advertised as originally made for palace use; and objects like the "Double Happiness Ginger Jar," Bloomingdale's "reproduction of a T'ang dynasty treasure."

The packaging of China as timeless and aristocratic was complemented by the theme of its special devotion to the rare and handcrafted. The artifacts for sale at the Chinese Bloomingdale's were consistently presented as "precious and original." Display shelves in the store were filled with "hand-painted porcelain underglaze bowls," "hand-carved cinnabar coasters," and "handwoven rugs," whose "rare and original" qualities could be found "exclusively at Bloomingdale's." These craft objects and a multitude of others—"each one a work of art"—testified to what Bloomingdale's promoters called the special Chinese "concern for utmost quality and artistic merit."

Bloomingdale's glorification of China in the guise of a timeless, aristocratic civilization dedicated to the handicrafts revealed two fundamental contradictions. First, the dazzling artifacts from the People's Republic were not authentic vessels of ancient mysteries but rather the simulated products of a shrewd business alliance between the Bloomingdale's managers and the Communist Chinese government. Indeed, the Chinese imports were the first fruits of a new commercial agreement between the United States and China, which Bloomingdale's was among the first to cash in on. Eager to increase its exports abroad, China signed a 1979 trade agreement with the United States in which the Chinese offered to manufacture consumer and luxury items in China to the desired specifications of the American client.

A peculiar paradox enabled the Communist Chinese to cooperate with the center of consumer capitalism. In 1979 and 1980 China embarked on a new program, the "four modernizations," to help stimulate its much-needed economic development. The "four modernizations" included science, technology, industry, and technical education, which government officials stated would also provide the required components for a "new decade of socialist construction." As in other times in its history, China proposed to pave the roads of modern construction with the proceeds from the sale of its feudal heritage. Since the time of Marco Polo, China had struck a bargain with the West, ransoming off the rich, exotic artifacts of its imperial culture in exchange for the tools of modernization. In 1980 China was again eager to "export its cultural legacy," which had been prohibited under Mao as the domain of the "four olds" (language, art, customs, and clothes). The profits from the Bloomingdale's sales of simulated noble China would be used to pay the advisers from the Conoco, Fluor, and American Steel corporations that the Chinese had invited to help with its communist goal of the "four modernizations."

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Bloomingdale's acted quickly on the new United States-China trade agreement and set to work establishing ties with Chinese craft manufacturers who would fill their orders. The items commissioned were designed by Bloomingdale's artists in New York, who projected their fantasies of the opulent, mysterious empire and ordered accordingly. This, then, was the origin of the "authentic" Chinese imports, envisioned in New York by Bloomingdale's designers and then custom-made, in China, with labels stating in both English and Chinese, "Made in China for Bloomingdale's." Thus Bloomingdale's image of China was fashioned on the basis of a double artifice: the objects that captured the "essence" of China were themselves first sketched out on Lexington Avenue, and then they were made in China exclusively for Bloomingdale's in manufactories set up especially for American export.

Bloomingdale's explicitly celebrated its own responsibility for creating China in its image. A *New Yorker* cartoon that showed Chinese factory managers stating that they had "to wait for Bloomingdale's instructions to begin production" was used by the store in its own ad campaign to illustrate its "newest expansion in China." Other ads credited Bloomingdale's own buyers for ensuring the standards and quality of Chinese products. One claimed that the beautiful handmade Chinese sweaters knit for Bloomingdale's were "developed one-on-one with the Chinese . . . to our standards, our American taste, with the Chinese attentiveness to quality and detail." Another rhapsodized, "Oh, the artisans we guided so carefully to bring you . . . everything that so eloquently speaks of the elegance and grace indigenous to China." And a third explained that the Bloomingdale's representatives on location in Beijing made sure that the Chinese objects "looked crafted, not made."

The second contradiction intrinsic to the presentation of China at Bloomingdale's emerged in relation to the "handmade" and "original" qualities attached to the merchandise. During the previous ten years Bloomingdale's had participated in a more general marketing movement, the arrival of the handcrafted item in the department store. In the nineteenth century, when the department store was born, it was perceived as the enemy of the handmade item. In Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames*, for example, the department store is presented as a ruthless, voracious monster, whose commitment to volume and fast turnover signaled the death of the small retail shop and the individual artisans who supplied it. In America, since the late 1970s, this assumption of a life-and-death struggle between the big department store and the individual artisan has been dramatically altered. Department stores have welcomed the craftsmen, reflecting and expressing Americans' attraction to the signed, individually rendered item. This absorption of the artisanal into the centers of consumer emporiums marks the ultimate reversal of the 1960s back-to-nature, back-to-the-homemade-crafts impulse. If the production of handmade use objects once expressed cultural rebellion, now department stores offer signed, individually crafted items, from chocolate to underwear, as purchasers' status symbols.

Bloomingdale's handicraft China was part of this broader change in merchandising over the past decade. The China show clarified a contradiction underlying the general trend of promoting "original" craft items in the department store. For although the Chinese plates, robes, coats, and jewelry at "Bloomie's" were surrounded by placards proclaiming their "rare," "original," and "handcrafted" character, the number and variety of items suggested their very lack of uniqueness. How could scores of rugs and bins overflowing with cloisonné stickpins be seen as "each and every one a work of art"? Although the items were at least partly handmade, they were hardly the fruits of a single, patient, and skilled artisan who worked as had those under imperial tutelage. The Bloomingdale's China wares had a claim on being handmade in that they were not made by machines. But the craft objects imported from China were produced at human assembly lines, where massive orders for hand-painted fans, bowls, plates, and clothes were filled by intense division of labor and specialization. The "timeless artisans" who supplied Bloomingdale's shelves and racks worked at repetitive, painstaking tasks in which scores of skilled laborers contributed a monotonous small part in the creation of a single craft product.

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If their production by sweated craft labor belied the handmade character of the Chinese items, their supposed "rare" and "unique" qualities were subverted by their very plethora. Bloomingdale's tried very hard to envelop the many objects on display in a distinction suggested by their history and lineage. Thus, as we have seen, scores of "Double Happiness Ginger Jars" were associated with the dynasty of their origin, and other items were labeled as reproductions of statues and relics of religious shrines. Yet the Bloomingdale's China spectator was assaulted by the sheer volume of the items and soon became anesthetized, as in all department stores, by the number and variety of the objects for sale. The stated sacred and imperial legacies of the objects dissolved in the kingdom of the commodity. The tags on the Chinese items leveled them into a single category, that of price. All the proclamations of distinction, of noble heritage, and of ritual use collapsed; underwear with "Made in China" labels, cinnabar coasters, miniature horse sculptures modeled on those of the emperors, and reprocessed imperial robes—all blurred into one mesmerizing imperative: How much does it cost?

China at the Metropolitan Museum, 1980

No sooner had the Bloomingdale's China project begun to wind down than a new celebration of China as the crucible of luxury, aristocracy, and rare artistic crafts was born. In December 1980 the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened an exhibition at its Costume Institute, "The Manchu Dragon: Costumes of China, the Ch'ing Dynasty, 1644-1912." Organized and installed by Diana Vreeland and her assistants, the Met show displayed magnificent Chinese imperial robes. The robes were not suspended in cases as in other costume exhibits; they were draped on mannequins' bodies and set in rooms reproducing the palace and temple settings in which the robes were originally worn. In this way Vreeland aspired to transport the viewer into the authentic atmosphere of Chinese imperial culture. Protected for centuries in China behind the walls of the emperors' quarters, the "Forbidden City," the opulence, refinement, and delicacy of what Vreeland called "the land of jade" were now exposed to public view.

Significantly, in the months before the Met show opened, many of the same precious Chinese robes to be exhibited at the Met had been on display at Bloomingdale's, where a special museum had been established for the duration of the China sales campaign. The Metropolitan exhibition was on the surface very different from the Bloomingdale's project. At the department store the real Chinese robes had been difficult to distinguish from the panoply of reproductions offered for sale in close proximity; the Met show focused only on the rare, authentic robes, lifting them out of the marketplace into the citadel of scholarship, connoisseurship, and historical explication. Yet despite the presumed difference between the consumerist and high cultural versions of China, the 1980 Met museum show shared the themes and selectivity of the Bloomingdale's packaging of China. The theme of the Met exhibition was the celebration of China as a timeless, aristocratic culture devoted to artistic crafts. And the ethos of the Metropolitan's curator, Diana Vreeland, was closer to a marketing strategy than to the task of historical education. The Metropolitan's Chinese robes show emerged as a perfect pendant to the Bloomingdale's presentation of China preceding it; it projected fantasies of wealth, power, and leisure attached to an ancient imperial civilization and displayed them in the form of a fashion show.

The Met exhibition extended Bloomingdale's vision of China as a timeless world "steeped in forty centuries of ritual and opulence." The costume show covered the entire span of the Manchu reign, a period of almost three hundred years. Historical specificity was entirely lacking from the exhibition displays; the only guiding principle was the emphasis on the long reign of luxury and opulence signified by the rulers' magnificent clothes and elegant furniture. The exhibit lacked basic information to enable the viewer to differentiate the various rulers and their historical contexts. The tags on the artifacts identified the robes, the materials out of which they were made, and their historical provenance, usually generalized as the "Ch'ing dynasty," which thus placed it some-

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where between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries.

The aristocratic and artisanal character of the Bloomingdale's China show also reappeared as the organizing themes at the Met. The exquisitely crafted stuffs of the emperors filled the Met halls with the original "dynastic dazzlers" celebrated in simulated form at Bloomie's. Lacquer screens, carved jade jewelry, celadon porcelains, pen quills and inkstands studded with precious stones, ivory and cinnabar miniature sculptures carved into women's hair combs—these were some of the objects crafted to the standards of the rulers. In the center of one of the exhibition halls, Vreeland re-created a royal boudoir, framed by a carved-wood pagoda top and bright red silk linens across the bed. The emperors' presence was felt throughout in the shimmering surfaces of their multicolored robes, and in the costumes worn by their wives and concubines. In one tiny corner near the imperial boudoir appeared a glimpse of the China beyond the ruler. A "Chinese coolie" was displayed, standing on a stepped platform, dressed entirely in a simple white shroud and hat. The white simplicity of the designated coolie contrasted sharply with the breathtaking colors of the imperial clothes and interiors by which it was quickly overwhelmed.

Like the contradictions in the Bloomingdale's project, the Met's presentation of China as timeless, aristocratic, and artisanal was subverted by the visibility of very timely elements in the exhibition. The attempt to reconstitute Chinese court life and clothes was mired in a thick layer of Western fantasy, specifically the fantasy of the fashion show designer and promoter. The influence of Diana Vreeland brought about the suspension of the normal categories of scholarly accuracy, historical erudition, and artistic connoisseurship with which museum shows are normally mounted. Vreeland approached the Chinese robes with the declaration, "I'm looking for the most farfetched perfection . . . and I'm terrible on facts. But I always have an idea. If you have an idea, you're well ahead!" The artifacts of Chinese civilization were subjected to the antihistorical drama of a woman who had invented the "composite photo" for shock effect.

The quintessentially Vreelandian perspective imposed on Chinese civilization emerged at the Met show in two ways. The first was in the use of mannequins. Immediately on entering the gallery, the spectator was thrown into a bizarre underworld closer to the more extreme pages of *Vogue* than to Chinese imperial courts. In a dimly lit room, one heard high-pitched ancient Chinese music, and one's senses were assaulted by a very powerful smell. Vreeland had drenched the room in a fragrance that she explained as capturing the essence of China—her friend Yves Saint Laurent's new perfume, called Opium. Opium may have been the essence of China to Vreeland, but, as Orville Schell reminds us, the drug had been originally imported into China by Western merchants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where, in contravention of Chinese law, they had traded the drug "at enormous profit for silk, tea, and silver." Opium, Schell continues, had been the traditional source of conflict between China and the West, for it epitomized the unequal and humiliating character of foreign treaties and actions. The 1980 Saint Laurent Opium fragrance drenching the Ch'ing dynasty Chinese emperors' robes recreated the historical license of Western misappropriation of China and added a startling new irony to the record of Western representations of the East. The sights of China immediately greeted the viewer who had just recovered from the sounds and smells. In a long row stood, in varying languorous poses, ten female mannequins bedecked in court robes and ceremonial costumes. The mannequins had elongated features, especially marked in their faces, hands, ears, and feet. Tall and ungainly, the "Chinese" mannequins in costume had faces painted in different color schemes—brown, pink, yellow, red, and black. Their pointy faces and ears gave them the strange look of Mister Spock in "Star Trek." Whatever their origin, the mannequins embodied an extension of the pages of an elite fashion magazine rather than representative types who might have worn Chinese courtly vestments.

The triumph of fashion illusionism over Chinese history appeared in a second way. The labeling of the objects in the show focused exclusively on their exquisite surfaces. Not

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only was explanation of historical provenance missing, but the exhibit labels offered no sense of the meaning and function of the Chinese robes and decorative arts within their national context. The labels delineated, in great detail, the richness and variety of the materials that went into the creation of the robes and other court costumes. This strategy resembled the descriptions used at fashion shows, where the dress paraded is complemented by the stated explanation of its contents. At the Met's China show the spectator was endlessly bombarded with tags stating "embroidered wool tabby, highlighted with gold silk threads and brocaded velvet"; "informal suit, silk damask topped with sequined scarf," and so forth. In all the labels, the anachronistic jargon of fashion talk like "informal suits," "at-home wear," and "summer dress"; was matched by the obsessive attentiveness to the expensive materials quite clearly visible on the surface of the imperial garments.

At the time of the Chinese robes exhibition, reviewers like Rita Reif commented that "there was more fantasy than fact in these displays." Reif went on to note one glaring inaccuracy in the show, which altered the meaning and function of the imperial robes: they were not worn for public display, but for private worship. Reif remarked that the magnificent robes were always worn underneath a long, plain black overcoat; only the borders of the brightly colored robes were ever visible on the emperor. In addition, Reif indicated that Vreeland had mixed and matched Chinese raiment indiscriminately. Never would a Chinese wife or courtesan of the emperor have worn an "outfit" like the ones created by Vreeland. Reif claimed that the mannequins displayed the "layered look" of 1970s fashion designers rather than the style of any Chinese historical period.

There was another visible distortion in the Met's China show, which sapped the Chinese robes of their primary significance and function. The essence of the Chinese robe was not on its surface, but in the deep symbolic meaning that it expressed. The Chinese robes operated in a cosmological system where all material objects were redolent with meaning. Not only wool tabby and gold thread adorned the emperor's robes, but symbols of his authority and of his place in a sacred hierarchy binding the gods and their earthly representatives. The imperial robes had as their insignia the five-fingered dragon, a symbol exclusively reserved for the ruler. The emperor's robe was a microcosm of the heavenly macrocosm; all types of natural forces were splayed across the robe—fire and water, sky and air—summarizing all of creation on the body of the emperor. Encased in the robe, the ruler's body symbolized the axis and his head the apex of the universe. Rigid codes governed the symbolism of all garments, and each person in the Chinese social system, from bureaucrat and palace guard to scholar and soldier, had a particular outer sign to mark his rank. Thus, the clothes at the Met show all originally expressed the membership of their bearer in a caste system, and the signs and designs on the outer garb were emblems of position in the hierarchy of man and nature. In Diana Vreeland's hands, the links between surface, symbol, meaning, and social function so central to the Chinese imperial garments were eliminated. The "Empress of Clothes" pressed the Chinese artifacts into the service of a new fad for gilded and glossy outfits befitting a new American cult of visible wealth and power.

The devotees of Diana Vreeland and the contemporary cult of opulence surfaced at a grand celebration at the Met two weeks before the opening of the Chinese robes exhibition. On the evening of December 8, 1980, the Council of Fashion Designers sponsored a lavish gala to greet the show and pay tribute to its artificer, Vreeland. The *New York Times* characterized the christening party as "Fashion's Big Night at the Met." Seven hundred people paid three hundred dollars apiece to dine on the obligatory coquilles Saint-Jacques and fillet of beef, to watch Chinese fireworks, and to get an exclusive preview of the show.

The designers sponsoring the Chinese evening at the Met were longtime associates of Diana Vreeland, among them Yves Saint Laurent, Bill Blass, Oscar de la Renta, Adolfo, and Halston. Led by Blass, they created a party theme à la chinoise to capture the "proper air of mystery" intrinsic to China. The Met's Great Hall and dining area were transformed

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into a "Red Palace." Red carpets graced all the floors of the party chambers, which were lit from above by red spotlights. The grand reflecting pool around which the dinner guests sat was surrounded by huge banners hung from the ceiling. The tables were laid with black tablecloths and red napkins, and enlivened by red glazed vases filled with yellow lilies and sprays of quince. The ironic overtones of such a "red China" seemed to bother no one; the fashion council created its version to echo the luxury and exoticism captured in the exhibition's dazzling displays.

According to all reports, the splendor of China soon paled when compared to the lavish opulence exhibited by the party's American participants. "Fashion's big night at the Met" used China as a backdrop; the real show was in the array of new clothes designed by the party's sponsors and paraded on the partygoers. A new line of costumes was launched at the Met—"luxurious dresses" that "overshadowed the grandeur of the imperial robes." Stately Nancy Kissinger arrived in an original by Adolfo, the exclusive designer who was busy preparing Nancy Reagan's first inaugural suit. Diana Vreeland wore a shimmering gold jacket set off by a black skirt. Two representatives from Bonwit Teller's in "glittering dresses" promoted the sumptuous look of the new season's fashions. A Bloomingdale's executive arrived at the party in a multicolored, embroidered Chinese robe.

The Met party and its glorification of aristocratic Chinese culture coincided with President-Elect and Mrs. Reagan's December 1980 trip to New York, where they were joined at private dinners by fashion moguls Bill Blass and Oscar de la Renta. Nancy Reagan collected Chinese porcelains and lacquer tables, and revealed that her initial project as First Lady would be the redecoration of the White House private quarters to accommodate her exquisite Chinese decorative pieces. Two weeks after the Met party, the *New York Times Magazine* devoted its cover story to Françoise and Oscar de la Renta. Splashed across the Sunday magazine was a huge color photo of the rich and elegant designer couple, she in a blazing gold tunic and a collar six strands thick with pearls; he in a sleek black suit. The article, by Francesca Stanfill, was titled "Living Well Is Still the Best Revenge." Stanfill celebrated the "rarefied taste" and powerful wealth of the couple, "distinguished," she stated, by their "sense of luxury" and the fact that "they have no fear of ostentation, nor are they inhibited by the pressure of discretion that often characterizes those with old fortunes." The fortune of Dominican-born Oscar de la Renta (né Renta) had been made in the mid-1970s, "not by shrewd marketing or even avant-garde designing, but by an unerring taste, and, to a great extent, a familiarity with his affluent clientele." De la Renta's speciality was extravagance, which usually took the form of massive ruffles attached to flamboyant skirts and evening gowns. While these luxury fashions had been the preserve of a small coterie of the wealthy for a decade, a new clientele and public presence now focused on the de la Rentas.

Stanfill associated the de la Rentas with a shift in American high society, a shift she predicted would be expressed in the Reagan White House. She identified the de la Rentas as part of a "new professional elite": "the very rich, the very powerful," the representatives of "current talent and current fame." This elite, according to Stanfill, was different from previous ones. This was no "leisure jet set," nor a society filled with bearers of old money and old family names. The de la Rentas were at the center of a "phalanx" of the "working upper-crust," a nouveau riche group that represented the fusion of society with big business. Fashion designers were a central part of this new elite, as managers of international licensing empires and as media celebrities binding their products to their personal identities. This was a group marked by "the energy, incentive, fearlessness, and aggressiveness of the ambitious." Vreeland was identified in the article as another figure in this new elite: "Now everything is power and money and how to use them both," Vreeland declared.

Stanfill went on to describe how the de la Rentas cloaked their ambition in elegant, opulent surroundings in a series of country and city residences whose overstuffed, cozy interiors were filled with refined luxury items. Françoise de la Renta, renowned for her talents as a

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decorator, arranged her rooms as "sybaritic backdrops" for her weekly salons; "masses of Rothschild lilies, flocked red velvet walls edged in *faux marbre*, silk upholstered Second Empire chairs, mother-of-pearl cabinets, windows swagged in heavy, fringed silk": these were some of the vessels of the de la Rentas' ineffable taste. Françoise told the *Times* reporter that she had developed her style as a decorator by studying great works of French literature, especially Balzac. "One thing that is very noticeable in Balzac is the *demimondaine*." She smiles. "One can learn a hell of a lot from the *demimondaine*."

The use of the motto "Living well is the best revenge" in relation to the unchecked pursuit of wealth, as symbolized by the de la Rentas, has undergone a telling transformation. A Spanish proverb, the phrase originated as a statement of philosophical resignation to fate: God was cruel, the world was difficult and painful, and one had to bear it with the understanding of an individual's limited power to control it. The motto was popularized in America through its association with the F. Scott Fitzgerald circle in the 1920s. Gerald Murphy, an American expatriate in France who socialized with the Fitzgeralds and Ernest Hemingway, invoked the saying in the context of the bohemianism, nonconformity, and bitterness that followed the devastation of World War I. Murphy and his coterie proposed a life of license in isolation as a reaction to the shattering of all ideals by the war. In 1980-1981, "Living well is the best revenge" has gone from being associated with the anguished withdrawal of postwar hedonists to being tied to the raucous centrality of elite Reagan supporters. Rather than having to do with wreaking revenge on a world that has exposed moral ideals as illusions, the slogan now implies revenge on the poor, who are considered undeserving.

The Reagan Inauguration: Opulence and Chinoiseries

The inauguration of Ronald Reagan in January 1981 channeled the celebration of luxury, and its presumed historical carriers, from the salons of the New York fashion designers to the chambers of state. The image-makers of aristocratic privilege in clothes and interior design were not only associates of curator Diana Vreeland but friends of Nancy and Ron. And the cult of visible wealth expressed in culture and merchandising was transposed into the policies of social repudiation pursued by the Reagan White House.

The Reagan presidential inaugural festivities trumpeted the arrival of opulence at the highest levels of state. Commentators like R. Williams, Laurence Leamer, and Michael Kinsley noted the "staggering splendor" and coronation tone to the affair. President Reagan requested that invitees don the formal morning "stroller" suit, popular at the time of the Prince of Wales, for the swearing-in ceremony. Nancy Reagan's gowns, gloves, embroidered handbags, hand-sewn shoes, and floor-length minks changed constantly before the eyes of the public. Outfitting Nancy were her longtime friends, designers Bill Blass, Adolfo, and Galanos, who garbed the First Lady in their new concept of the "sybaritic outfit." At one of the gala inaugural events the Reagans and the Bushes were treated to an evening of Hollywood entertainment, taped live for television. Frank Sinatra organized the evening, and the performers' stage was set directly opposite a platform on which four plush winged chairs were arranged. Nancy and Ron looked like the king and queen observing their many jesters; Mrs. Bush sat shimmering in an embroidered Chinese robe.

The Reagan inauguration set the tone for a full-fledged cult of visible luxury and unrestrained flaunting of wealth. The $16 million inaugural extravaganza witnessed the arrival of the millionaire Californians and Hollywood stars in Washington, where they inched their way through a crush of limousines and gorged on endless delicacies. A startling contrast to the rich Reagan revelers was seen in one telling incident, when the Washington city derelicts and bag ladies made their way into Union Station, crashing the party reserved for those who had bought the one-thousand-dollar entry tickets. The hungry poor, whom Reagan aides were soon to dub wily cheaters, helped themselves to the "lobster bisque, shrimp merlin, escargots, and vitello alla geatano" heaped on forty tables. The mingling of the super rich and

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the street people under the iron-and-glass sheds of Union Station offered a startling juxtaposition of the two worlds.

The dedication of Nancy Reagan to display brought new attention to the elite fashion designers; the *Times* noted in January that "their business is booming, despite the recession." Nancy's cult of snobbism in appearance also legitimized lavish ornamental femininity. Nancy had been, for over twenty years, a "professional lady" who spent her days with Betsy Bloomingdale, Jean Smith, Mary Jane Wick, and Marion Jorgenson on the complex work of maintaining a youthful and elegant appearance. The *New York Times* and other papers indicated that a new kind of woman had arrived in the train of Nancy Reagan and her sumptuous adornments. This was not an eastern woman but a Sunbelt beauty, who "cared about style and did not want to look unobtrusive." She was "upwardly mobile, suburban, with a sensibility founded on buying power and an unabashed appreciation of luxury." Nancy represented this woman's values; she unleashed a new era of style, a style that melded the nouveau riche values of the de la Rentas and Blasses with the rugged individualism of western entrepreneurs and their wives. "We've worked for this," the wife of a Texas real estate developer at the inaugural ball was quoted as saying. "We're proud and we're not afraid to show it." The sense that hard work should be rewarded was the theme expressed by other women attending the ball. Bedecked in ruffled satin gowns by Blass, de la Renta, and Galanos, and gleaming in egg-shaped rubies, diamonds, ostrich feathers, and ermine capes, these women noted how they were "tired of having to apologize for ourselves." Nancy Reagan provided these women with a "lift": "Now we know it's all right to buy grand clothes again without looking out of place." The *Times* article concluded that in some ways these women were the Cinderella wives of Horatio Alger husbands, who offered visible proof to everyone beneath them on the social scale that "they can do it too."

Coming in *Dissent:*

Poles and Jews in the Second World War, by Jan Gross

Remembering Mississippi Summer 1964, by Nicolaus Mills

A Letter from Moscow, by Roy Medvedev

Vreeland's Allure and Reagan's Political Culture, 1980

THE "NEW WOMAN" AT THE INAUGURAL BALLS expressed in fashion the ethos of Reagan's politics of rugged, venturesome individualism and its ideology of deserved rewards. From the beginning of his administration, Reagan was relentless in his declaration of the need for a return to the old American values of individual effort and risk-taking, and the upward mobility to follow from both. Reagan justified the inaugural luxury as evidence of the riches that were obtainable in American society through hard work and talent.

Many writers have pointed out the anachronisms and ironies of Reagan's free-enterprise ideology: the rough-and-tough individualist idealized by the rancher-president has little basis in either the marketplace of advanced corporate capitalism or the personal success story of the president himself. The president never liked to work, and he prospered less from individual effort than from a combination of luck, corporate power, and the uncanny ability to please. He got his start in both economic and political life as the "corporate ambassador" for General Electric in the 1950s. He was drafted into gubernatorial politics by millionaire California conservatives Tuttle, Salvatori, and Rubel in 1964. And few members of Reagan's inner circle of friends and advisers—Alfred Bloomingdale, Justin Dart, William French Smith, or Charles Wick—owed their wealth and position to the operations of isolated individuals striving in the free market. Reagan's appeal to ordinary Americans to aspire to free-

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dom, self-reliance, moral rectitude, and individual diligence is a masterful exercise of the "politics of symbolism."

The Reagan politics of theater and of elitist individualism received a striking cultural expression in the work and writings of Diana Vreeland. A few months before the opening of the Met China show Vreeland published a book called *Allure*. The text of *Allure* revealed that Vreeland nourished fantasies not only of opulent nobilities of the past but of cruelty and decadence in the present.

Allure was a mixture of memoirs and oracles from the queen of the elite fashion world, whose taste and sense of style had been nurtured in over thirty years of editing *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. A large folio volume with huge black-and-white fashion photos interspersed with textual comments by Vreeland, the book collected Vreeland's favorite fashion photographers, from the Baron de Meyer to Irving Penn, and her favorite beautiful women, among them the Vicomtesse de Ribes, Greta Garbo, Evita Perón, Gertrude Stein, Marilyn Monroe, and the Duchess of Windsor. The dust jacket characterized as "by turns witty, sharp, extravagant, and cruel," the "Vreelandian perspective" which took the reader through a "luxurious, gossip-ridden world that DV knows so well."

One clear theme of *Allure* was aristocratic revival and its contemporary aesthetic emulation. Vreeland glorified the "stature," "inner exaltation," "bones," and "strength" of the Duchesse de Gramont, the beauty of Russian noblewoman Princess Yousoupoff, and the visible royalty of Princess Bebar, wife of the last sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Born in France and brought up in England, Mrs. Vreeland (née Diana Hoffman Dalziel) recalled that the coronation of George V in 1911 was a central event in her early life. She loved the "correctness and perfect design" of the horses, carriages, and military men in procession and lamented that such grace "survives today only in the army, the navy, the church, and in royalty." In other places in the book Vreeland hinted at the many members of the upper crust that she knew personally. Invoking no less an authority than Marcel Proust, one of her favorite authors, she passed scathing comments on other people's social backgrounds: she described Maria Callas as "common as mud"; Josephine Baker, the music hall performer, as "a total Parisienne, even though she was a laundress's daughter from St. Louis"; and, in the inverse, Vreeland remarked of Elsa Maxwell that "she looked vulgar; her nose was vulgar. She looks like a cook on her day off . . . of course, she no doubt had just been dining with a king—always kings!! She had the best taste in people."

Much of Vreeland's book aspired to define the meaning of true "elegance" and "allure." Vreeland acknowledged that aristocracies of the blood were gone; female aristocracies of the spirit could be cultivated through style and taste, manifested in the ineffable qualities of "elegance" and "allure." The meaning of "allure" was ambiguous in Vreeland's account. Allure is "something that *holds* you; it is something around you like a perfume or a scent. It's like memory—it pervades." In another section Vreeland distinguished fashion from elegance. Fashion is transient; "elegance is innate." It is a quality, according to Vreeland, possessed by certain animals, like gazelles, and women like Audrey Hepburn. The clearest definition Vreeland arrived at was "Elegance is refusal."

Vreeland's "witty, sharp, extravagant" tone, and her snobbish celebration of old and new aristocracies, had long been her trademarks. In the 1930s, when Mrs. Vreeland began writing for *Harper's Bazaar*, she established a column, "Why Don't You . . . ?" which amused Depression readers with bits of advice like "Why don't you convert your ermine coat into a bathrobe?" and "Why don't you wash your hair with champagne?" For Vreeland then, as now, all of this was grand posturing and playacting. When and whether she ever had real contact with European royalty and nobility is unclear. According to Jesse Kornbluth, Vreeland never had any formal education to speak of, trained briefly with the Ziegfeld Follies chorus girls as a dancer, and then ran a lingerie shop in London that specialized in black underwear. By her own admission, her world was a stage: "Performance is all I cared about as a child and it's all I care about now." Kornbluth characterized Vreeland as a shrewd individualist and ambitious businesswoman who had to work hard to

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subsidize her aristocratic affectations: "Though fated to be remembered as a high-society fashion oracle, Diana Vreeland has, all these years, been one of our greatest actresses, systematically parading her precariously luxurious life as a way of earning her daily *madeleine*."

Less amusing and more pernicious themes surfaced in *Allure*, articulated in scathing and sadistic tones, suggesting the underside of the aristocratic revival. Vreeland had a long history of insidious statements, from the time in her 1930s columns that she recommended "Why don't you wear bare knees and long white knitted socks as Unity Mitford does when she takes tea with Hitler at the Carlton in Munich?" In 1980 Diana Vreeland sprinkled *Allure* with her memoirs of the 1930s. At one point she discussed the German spas and chuckled about her German doctor's prediction of mass murder:

> At the Kurhaus, in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Reed and I would take baths and massages in the Black Forest. Every morning Dr. Govens would apply the Grenz ray to my sinuses. In the coming war they were going to release it and everyone in sight would be dead—they'd tell you all this. "Ooo," I'd say, "I can hardly wait; you Germans are so busy—such busy-bodies!"

Sadism and violence appeared in *Allure*, in the service of Vreeland's commitment to shock. She recounted how she discovered the composite photo for *Vogue* as a capstone to her career objective of not being boring or predictable. "I think laying out a beautiful picture in a beautiful way is a bloody bore. . . . The most boring thing on earth is to be of the world of what you do. That means people only expect from you what they think they'll get. That to me isn't the Big Time." Vreeland claimed that "you've got to blow the picture right across the page and down the side, crop it, cut it in half, do something with it!" Her violent artificing led her to "put arms and legs and everything else together" in a single layout, the composite photo. Faces were always missing from these spreads, which made *Vogue* notorious in the 1960s. Cutting up and mixing body parts of different models on a page, Vreeland declared, "I want arms! I want legs! I want hands!" Another of her innovations for *Vogue* was painting a white model shiny black with shoe polish and studding her eyes, breasts, and arms with diamonds, as testimony to the fact that "there's no place in the world where there's a vein of precious stone that doesn't belong to people of color. And they look so marvelous in jewels. . . . But a true black hand, however black, would have been . . . banal."

Allure depicted the shoe-polish-sprayed model and the dismembered elements of composite fashion photos. It also included a huge five-page insert that Vreeland had commissioned, though it was too barbaric even for *Vogue*. Vreeland thought it would be amusing, and shocking, to photograph an eye-lift operation. *Allure* published this photo spread, which *Vogue* had censored, illustrating with magnified camera lenses all phases of the cutting, lifting, and grafting of the eye skin. Vreeland said these pictures captured the fact that "I adore artifice!"

Diana Vreeland cultivated detachment and disengagement; the meaning and substance of her statements and her photos were always subordinated to the creation of effect, as long as it was not a bore. An omnipotence fantasy ruled these illusions; they were filled with the sense that the world could be shaped and reshaped in the cutting hands and bizarre eyes of its Vreelandian maker.

Vreeland's main message in *Allure*, that "elegance is refusal," had not only sexual but social implications. "We mustn't be afraid of snobbism and absurdity. And we mustn't be afraid of luxury—there are no pictures of poverty here!" she exclaimed. *Allure* was a big seller in 1980, and has been since. In 1982 it received the Annual Rodeo Drive Gala Award in Los Angeles. Along the Beverly Hills street, the home of the exclusive boutiques where Nancy Reagan had shopped for her first inaugural wardrobe, Vreeland's book was displayed in every window, with costly jewels, scarves, shoes, and clothes wrapped around it. DV did talk once about poverty in *Allure*, explaining that when Elsa Maxwell lost all her money, she took it in style—when her piano and furniture were repossessed, she "performed an entire opera" for Vreeland, "slapping it out on those big, fat thighs of hers." Perhaps this was the fantasy of poverty that the Rodeo Drive merchants wished to nurture. □

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Bernard Rosenberg

Dave the Slasher & Cap the Knife

Happy Memories of Life in Gipper's Gang

Is ectoplasm in short supply on Publishers Row? If not, I wonder why his publishers did not supply David Stockman with good ghosts for the manufacture of his best seller, cleverly but misleadingly called *The Triumph of Politics*.* One darkly suspects that much of the prose that makes a sensitive reader wince genuinely belongs to the author. The stylelessness is the man. He has, however, given us something that is not so much a book as a document to be studied for certain symptomatic peculiarities.

Even in his own eyes Stockman is no hero. He first glorifies and then vilifies practically everyone who has crossed his path from childhood to middle age. But throughout his contumacious account, nobody is treated with greater scorn than David Stockman himself. Ever the ideologue of this-or-that or of neither-and-both, in the ripeness of his thirty-nine years, he has been all over the political map. Soon after "chattering about how great Goldwater was and how he was going to save us from that socialist, Johnson," while a student at the "cow college" of his choice, young Stockman's "idealism" and desire to do good made him a full-fledged, if admittedly half-baked "neo-Marxist." He let his hair grow long for awhile, no doubt distractedly, for his nose —no mention of his eyes—was buried "deep" in the *Village Voice*, *Ramparts*, and Thomas Altizer's *God is Dead* as well as "the mandatory classics of Camus, Ginsberg, and the other oracles of existentialist ennui." What a witches' brew stirred in the *wunderkind*'s head.

And there would be more, so much more that it included "all [!] the literature of Western civilization." That's what the teenage hayseed (his term) found in Reverend Truman Morrison's library. Morrison, an "intellectual father," not the first and far from the last, was a man of "awesome" learning. Of what did his comprehensive library consist? Political science, psychology, sociology, history, theology and philosophy: "From Sumeria to the latest issue of *Dissent*, it was all there. . . ." (What issue could that have been?) On this feast he "fed greedily." He sniffed, he gorged, he did not see. And it shows.

STOCKMAN IS EXCESSIVELY MODEST in characterizing himself as a mere ideologue. Over and over he displays an exquisite aptitude for translating whatever doctrine possesses him into rampant activism. Man and boy, Stockman has been a dervish, a creature in constant motion finally working his head off for at least one cause, "the Reagan Revolution," in whose attainability he had lost confidence soon after his initial four-and-a-half year commitment to it.

He does not let us forget that before the flakiest New Right attracted him, he was an avatar of the flakiest New Left whose rhetoric never seems to have deserted him. We are, for

* *The Triumph of Politics: Why the Reagan Revolution Failed*, by David A. Stockman (New York: Harper & Row, 1986). 422 pp. $21.95.

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instance, confronted over and over with "central committees" and "troikas" in the White House. They are composed of top presidential advisers, endlessly thwarting him on his way. They were as pestiferous as lobbyists, civil servants, special interests, congressmen—although he'd been one for two terms—senators, voters, false friends, Democrats, and, much less forgivably, Republicans. In the end, everybody.

Even Papa Reagan temporized on fiscal matters: apparently inattentive, certainly out of his depth, Reagan had a habit, or a tic, that maddened Stockman. When those in the Cutting Room who had been ordered to chop more out of social services did not agree on the exact amount, Le Cowboy would say, "Let's split the difference." Stockman as head of the Office of Management and Budget didn't want to split anything. Away with the Welfare State, which is what he and so many others now call New Deal and Great Society legislation that, at its height, still fell short of services established by Bismarck. The faint-hearted who surrounded him merely nibbled at Social Security, education, conservation, safety, job training, hunger, and housing programs. What was a Cutting Room for if not to *slaughter* them? The Stockman who served our leader wanted to go whole hog. The presidential clique that professed just as much devotion to free enterprise (i.e., full government control of the arms industry), monetarism (i.e., full control of the money supply by a federal agency) and a balanced budget *and* supply-side economics—this group continually betrayed the great cause for which he tirelessly fought.

What was that cause? To explain it, Stockman resorts to Trotskyist talk, off-key as always. He favored "perpetual," probably meaning permanent, revolution. Which slogan had his erstwhile comrades used? Never mind. A total turnover right away is the point. Multitudes far and near, while ostensibly buying the ideology in general, grouped themselves to oppose those parts that would alienate too many constituencies. "When putsch came to shove" they let him down. Politics! It's why the (Ron) Reagan Revolution failed. It's also why the (Tom) Hayden Revolution failed. Only totalitarianism could have made the scheme or scam work. So the mature Stockman has come to know. To his credit he does not conclude that we should therefore adopt totalitarianism. Neither does he very clearly repudiate it. Who knows what doctrine stockbroker Stockman, the stock-man as ideologue, will next embrace?

Decades ago David Riesman coined the term "other-directed" for a certain type of character structure—David Stockman's type. Wise men wrote about it centuries ago. But I cannot remember a case in *The Lonely Crowd* or, say, *The Characters* of Jean de la Bruyère more extreme than Stockman's. As he only too believably tells us, his character was formed by a succession of role models, gurus, teachers, preachers, peers, two rabbis (John Anderson, a sometime rabbi, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, almost a full-time rabbi) plus one god on earth: "To me [Irving] Kristol was a secular incarnation of the Lord Himself." But this god too was to fail him. As early as 1980, Stockman's faith had slipped. And why not? Stockman had heard Lord Kristol address the House Republican Caucus, dispensing "political realism," that made Stockman the worshipper nervous. Quoth the Earthly God "who had been shaped" by left-wing New York City culture but later became the prime "advocate of a contrariant [sic] viewpoint": "Don't be foolish! Your constituents are the elderly, the farmers, and the veterans. Don't alienate them, don't cut their programs."

Don't cut? This tin god turned out to be an all-too-human heretic, no more worthy of deification than Caspar Weinberger. Dave the Slasher vividly remembers Cap the Knife. What a cutter was he! The very model, the role model to be surpassed, as Richard Nixon's budget director. Not a god, perhaps, but at least a high priest of niggardliness. If only we had heeded the earlier Weinberger, the rich would have become enormously richer and the poor might have perished instead of languishing in our midst. But it was the new Weinberger who prevailed, exceeding the Pentagon's wish list, securing every thousand dollar screwdriver, engorging contractors, a monstrous spendthrift finessing Dave, the skinflint. Stockman had counted on an ally, a man who had

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been frustrated by Nixon's New Economic Policy (which, naturally, he likens to Lenin's New Economic Policy).

Here is a showdown in the Oval Office where Stockman pleads for a meager, illusory reduction in military expenditures. Reagan does "not grasp the difference between constant dollars and current (inflated) dollars." Does it matter? The profligate secretary of defense "launches into a speech" that the Slasher had heard before. A heaviness comes over him as Weinberger speaks like the great courtier that he is: "Sir," he says, "you're the commander-in-chief and we will manage with any figure you give us. But you should be aware that there would be a serious risk in making any cuts." Every last gold-plated toilet seat had to be bought. Otherwise the Evil Empire would swallow us up. But if you want to take that responsibility, Mr. President, it's all yours. Words to that effect. And how they made the budget director squirm.

Stockman could not cope with Weinberger. Anyhow, except for frills, it did not matter. Nowhere does he object to the big military buildup as such. His fixation is domestic. That foreign and domestic affairs are indivisible escapes him. So yield to Cap; let us be strong; then we can subdue Grenada. Meanwhile, cut. Cut entitlements, Medicare and Medicaid, Supplementary Security Income for the aged, blind, and disabled. To hell with food stamps, AFDC, mass transit, revenue-sharing. "Energy subsidy programs could be thrown overboard," along with economic development in general. There was so much out there to throw overboard.

WHERE WERE WE? Where *are* we? In nineteenth-century France? Is the national slogan Guizot's "*Enrichissez-vous*," delivered in subliterary English with a wink and a shrug? Its outermost ideological reaches came to Stockman through people like Arthur Laffer, Jack Kemp and Jude Wanniski, who had written nothing less than a treatise called *The Way the World Works*, a book that hit Stockman "with the force of revelation." And revelation would lead to revolution, the real Reagan Revolution fueled by supply-side economics. Careful study of Stockman's material will not unequivocally answer the question of whether he is still a true believer in supply-side economics. That he has learned, however, about the only economics that works in this world—surprise-side economics—is to be doubted. Be that as it may, the Stockman of 1980 believed the Wanniski who kept repeating that just a few people like himself could change the course of history: it was his "mantra." How did the incantation go? "Overturning an existing order starts with one person and an idea. An idea [apparently not the *bearer* of an idea] persuades a second person, then a third, then a fourth. . . ." It made sense to the zealot who, with his usual thoroughness, had "studied Lenin's trip from Zurich to Russia in the boxcar, so I knew Wanniski wasn't talking historical rot."

The above is a little sampling of what subscribers to the Book-of-the-Month-Club who stay with Stockman, can glean from him. Take it from one who stayed with him through all his profundities, there is more and worse.

That he is poorly educated will be obvious even to the half-educated, and that he is better

Poverty Among Children

- Fifteen years ago, the child poverty rate stood at 13.8 percent. Today, the child poverty rate has climbed to 21.3 percent. Over 13.4 million children now are poor.
- No other segment of U.S. society has experienced such a striking increase in poverty. In fact, the poverty rate for children is now nearly double the poverty rate for adults.
- For the most vulnerable children—those under the age of six—the poverty rate is even higher. Almost one-quarter (24 percent) of all children under six live in poverty.
- For minority children, the situation is even more grim. Black and Hispanic children have poverty rates that are substantially higher than the poverty rates for other children. Among black children, nearly half (46.5 percent) are poor. Among Hispanic children, nearly two of every five (39 percent) are poor.

These numbers have tragic human consequences. America ranks 14th in the world in keeping our infants alive in the first year of life.

From *Building America's Future* (Detroit, Mich.: United Auto Workers of America, 1985). □

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educated than most of the Gipper's Gang also clearly emerges from his material. Stockman reads something, mostly trash, but they read nothing. Thus, the inner circle congratulated him when his name appeared on the cover of the *Atlantic*. It appeared there on account of an article by William Greider, who quoted Stockman lambasting the administration. The day before they denounced him, biggies like Meese, Baker, Regan, and Darman had, amid much merriment, presented him with a framed plaque for "the best cover story in the December 1981 issue of the *Atlantic* magazine." What happened from one day to the next? His jolly colleagues of the Legislative Strategy Group noticed that a television commentator had "gone with" the *Atlantic* story two nights in a row. The idiot box was *reality*, so then they went after Stockman's hide. Not Reagan, who chose to see his whiz kid as a victim of the media, kept him on board ("Dave, we need you"), and merely simulated an act of chastisement.

As a kid in rural Michigan, Dave really and regularly got taken to the woodshed by his father. Corporal punishment did not have the desired effect. Little David regarded his old man as a stick-in-the-mud. But Grandpa, William H. Bartz, who had a strong hold on the adolescent's psyche, was different. As county treasurer, Bartz had come to be "known and respected throughout the state." The desk in his office was "cluttered with copies of *Human Events*, the *Liberty Lobby* newsletter, the *Christian Messenger*" and other such scholarly journals that David "used to explore with endless fascination." So the boy was imbued with religious and political fundamentalism. Where he came from "God voted Republican." As a senior in high school he won an essay contest with "an ode" to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi in whom he saw "the distilled essence" of his grandfather's Christianity. We have it from his own pen: "I was gripped by a vision of a better world even then."

David was gripped by ambition too, and with his customary felicity, he lets us know why: "Growing up on a farm instills you with ambition." An interesting proposition, the more so since it immediately precedes a characterization of his father, Al, the Stick, who did not dream of expanding his hundred acres. Papa must have been the exception. Sonny, the Plowboy of the Midwestern World, was the rule.

Off he went in 1964 to Michigan State University. As a freshman, determined to uphold Grandpa Bartz's principles, he clung to them for whole months and then, very soon, Stockman reversed himself. It was 1965, a fateful time for chameleons. But poor old Grandpa Bartz remained intransigent:

> I had been hectoring him for some time now with my new views, and I wasn't getting anywhere. Finally, I decided it wasn't any use, he wasn't going to let me enlighten him, so I resolved to keep it to myself. Fifteen years later, in the White House, it would be almost exactly the same.

After graduation from MSU, Stockman was accepted as a divinity student at Harvard. For Stockman at first the switch seems to have meant little else than exemption from the draft, a fact about which he felt no shame. By then "even Walter Cronkite allowed himself to be critical of the Vietnam War." "Harvard was Shangri-la." It was also an echo of Camelot with men like Galbraith and Richard Neustadt on the premises. Stockman was thrilled "beyond belief" to breathe the same air as these famous men. Also Harvard was "the Reverend Morrison's library on a vast scale," presumably encompassing all of Eastern along with all of Western civilization. Stockman in his own estimation "was far more sophisticated about books than the real world." And so he was. But I fear he will now never know that there are books and books. In any event, the proximity of men who kept boarding the Washington-Boston Shuttle overwhelmed him: "It did not take long before I was thoroughly infected with the desire to find a place in the world at the other end of the shuttle." Swiftly, if circuitously, he did just that. The rest is dismal history, execrably recorded. □

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Ellen Levy

The Packaging of America

Politics as Entertainment, Entertainment as Politics

At first glance, it's a standard commercial for pain relievers—neutral background, earnest expert. Then, suddenly, this figure risks undermining the authority we had automatically ceded to him as he confides that "I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV." Clearly, he doesn't mean it as a joke, although at least one professional, and who knows how many amateur, comedians have substituted "president" for "doctor," reinforcing one's sense that the actor's confession has somehow strengthened his authority after all. For neither jokes about the president's being an actor nor his repeated confessions that he's no expert seem to disturb the voting public. Last year, when *60 Minutes* ran a humorous segment matching clips from Reagan's movies with news footage in which he struck the same postures and mouthed the same lines, viewers were not amused. The responses aired on a later show all took the tone of *How dare you!* A taboo had been violated, not by stating the well-known facts of Reagan's case, but by failing to create an atmosphere of neutrality that could thwart moral judgments and historical comparisons.

Twenty years ago, in talking about the mass media, John Ashbery made the chilling remark that "There is no remedy for this 'packaging' that has supplanted the old sensations." The "I'm not a doctor" ad (which started running in 1985) prompts the suspicion that now we have stopped even pretending to desire remedies. We give our attention to the packaging, which no longer conceals its intent to deceive. That is not to say that American audiences haven't noticed that the mass media have taken a sharp rightward turn in recent years. Some changes in the content of American movies and television shows coincident with the Reagan presidency have been hard to miss: Rambo-ism, military comedies, the mantralike repetition of "U.S.A." and "America" in pop songs and ad jingles. It has also been buzzed around that much of this materiel is surplus from the last cold war; that *Back to the Future* is both the title of *Rambo's* chief competitor at the box office, and an axiom of Reagan-era style.

But images of the past can as easily mask present realities as illuminate them—just as the image of the actor as authority inspires confidence or indignation, according to its packaging. For Ashbery, "packaging" is not just another image, but the measure of a change in social relations, the necessary consequence of the fact that, as he wrote, "In our own time, mass practices have sought to submerge the personality/By ignoring it." Mass practices teach the personality to ignore its own reactions in the face of a television or movie screen. The personality under siege needs aphorist Guy Debord's reminder that "The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images."

The elastic category of "spectacle" can include any social act that has an aspect of performance, from conspicuous consumption to the bombing of Libya. In the spectacle,

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value shifts from moral weight to sensational impact. Ashbery ascribes an "exact value"—a moral weight—to the doings and sayings of the human personality; therefore the personality in Ashbery's positive sense is replaced in the spectacle by a sensationalized ersatz with the same name, "the personality." Politics, commerce, crime, disease, are all reflected in the parallel world of the spectacle, as a glance through any issue of *People*, the weekly catalogue of "personalities," will show. However, in our habits of speech and of consumption, at least, we make the segment of the spectacle called entertainment into a paradigm for the whole apparatus of mass culture. We then set it above and apart from the rest, as fantasy from reality. In television, for instance, news and documentaries are mostly excluded from network prime time, while commercials, the financial base of the medium made visible, have been sharply distinguished from programming. Or rather, had been, until 1981, when MTV (see box) started running record company promotional tapes as programming, immediately boosting record sales beyond even MTV's owners' wildest expectations. Phenomena like the actor-president and the actor-doctor, the defense fantasy nicknamed "Star Wars," and MTV alike warn us that the distinctions we habitually make between entertainment and the real world of products and politics will no longer serve. Our habits themselves are breaking under the pressure of the simultaneous changes in our media and our government that could end by rendering the two of them virtually indistinguishable.

The commonplaces adequate to describe this situation haven't yet emerged, but intuitions of its significance pop up here and there. In a 1986 *Village Voice* interview on the future of the Democratic party, former Carter media gonzo Pat Caddell made a connection between the Republican triumph and MTV in emphatic, if vague, terms:

> The Democratic Party . . . has survived for a long time as a coalition party. But we live in a society that is a national society. Television has made this a single country. People in the Deep South get MTV. Their kids watch MTV. You have to understand what that means in terms of culture. The problem for the Democrats, in part, has been that the Republican Party, because it is a party that is more narrowly defined ideologically, has the ability to make a national presentation and a national stage presence.

Free associations like these create meaning only by inconsistency and omission; but Caddell's remarks are valuable for the questions they leave open. What sort of social relation holds among a nation of television-watchers (hallucinated as a country of teens hooked on MTV)? Why the Deep South? Is "stage presence" an addition to, or replacement for, "presentation"? One assumption that Caddell shares with equally ambitious, if more rhetorically coherent, Democrats is also questionable—that the party can and should move beyond coalition politics.

An editor might eliminate either "presentation" or "stage presence" as a redundancy. But a psychoanalyst might note that Caddell distinguishes between near-synonyms, as if he were divided between two perspectives on the same phenomenon. Caddell's slip from "presentation" to "stage presence" plays out in miniature a change in political practice pioneered by the Republicans, and now slowly being embraced by the Democrats. That change begins in the relation of an audience to its legitimate representatives. The framers of a genuine "presentation" expect their audience to question, comment on, approve or disapprove their work. Until the audience responds, the "presentation" remains incomplete. But the applause an audience accords a "stage presence" merely ratifies it. On television, applause can be stage-managed or piped in. An audience mesmerized by "stage presence" has no need or desire to voice its own responses. Enough practice in passivity will make them cease to value the capacity to judge individually; at the same time it will discourage them from forming the alliances among themselves that could give their responses social force.

Each group in a coalition represents specific needs and desires that cannot be assuaged by a nationally resurgent patriotism or nationally approved military ventures. (Like the products in commercials, the latter supply needs that are largely the invention of those who can make a

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profit on them.) Coalition politics may, therefore, prevent the members of a "national society" from forgetting how difficult, and how necessary, it is to live with one another's differences.

THOSE WHO WOULD JETTISON coalition politics would be the first to emphasize that a high tolerance for difference is what largely distinguishes the U.S. from the U.S.S.R. Commercials, which secretly aspire to mesmerism while publicly espousing active choice, provide a model for a politics that aims to maintain diversity in theory while diminishing it in practice. Where the aims of politics and advertising are simply conflated, the effect can be grotesque. Two of the more crassly anti-Soviet ads to run in recent years celebrate the diversity of products in America. One, for Wendy's hamburgers, features a Soviet "fashion show" in which the same gray shift passes for "svimvear," "eveningvear," and so on. The other shows the party faithful saluting Pepsi, and then Pepsi and Coke, in keeping with state policy, then cuts to a cottage in the Ukraine where dancing peasants chug RC Cola until the KGB tracks them down. Since our palates alone might never learn the difference between various fast-food burgers and colas, ad campaigns and brand names drill us in the lesson that sameness *is* difference. They distract from the real lack of alternatives by offering us freedom to choose among fantasies (front-runners in the market can claim to be "the real thing," while laggers like Wendy's and RC have to emphasize freedom of choice).

These commercials no more speak to a diversity of real needs than does the Reaganite theory of the Evil Empire, which presents us with a simplistic choice between two "systems," as a distraction from the specifics of any given political situation (and particularly of our own interventions). Real differences would only undermine the authority of this fantasy of choice. Where the fantasy cannot suppress the articulation of real differences, it interrupts it, as when critics of this administration break off in the midst of discussing Central America to put their undying opposition to Communism on record one more time. Such successful suppression produces tough hybrids of entertainment and politics, which out of habit we still identify as one or the other. Ticket-buyers for *Rocky IV* or *White Nights* have been heard to insist that they're not interested in politics, they just want to be entertained. By "politics," they mean the sticky reality out there, while the fantasy politics of a Stallone or a Reagan offer as complete an escape from that reality as the science fiction blockbusters (from 1977's *Star Wars* to 1982's *E.T.*) that served as its outriders. Trying to convince interviewer Alexander Cockburn that *Top Gun* was truly "apolitical," producer Jerry Bruckheimer explained, "we see this as kind of our *Star Wars* on earth."

Top Gun—like the other big hits produced by Bruckheimer and partner Don Simpson, *Flashdance* (1983) and *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984)—promotes freedom as an opportunity easily recognized and easily seized. The correlative of this "apolitical" freedom is, as Tom Cruise whoops while gunning up his jet, "Rock and *roll*." Bruckheimer and Simpson were among the first, and the most successful, moviemakers to capitalize on MTV's promotional power by packaging rock scores and sequences cut like commercials into nearly ready-made rock videos. Rock and roll is widely accepted cultural shorthand for anti-authoritarianism; but in these films, the wielders of the absolute freedom of action that is celebrated *are* the authorities. By contrast, citizens under Eddie Murphy's jurisdiction, or Nicaraguans under fire from real-life graduates of Top Gun, have no rights under rock-and-roll justice. That the majority of Americans under twenty-five who voted for Reagan seem to take this reversal of meanings in stride shocks many of us over twenty-five more than it should. Writing in Paris on the eve of 1968, Guy Debord already figured out that:

> youth, the transformation of what exists, is in no way the property of those who are now young, but of the economic system, the dynamism of capitalism. *Things* rule and are young; things confront and replace one another.

Youth is in the saddle and rides mankind—or, as another lyric would have it, we are the world, we are the children. As aging plants

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close and old agreements cease to protect the interests of workers, as our government struggles to maintain old imperial arrangements against the will of other peoples, images of youth dominate the media and their audience reads them as signs of domestic economic regeneration and a new freedom to impose our will in foreign policy. Caddell unconsciously yoked together the Deep South and MTV in a reach for the source of the Republicans' puzzling new claim on middle- and working-class Southern whites. The strength of that claim, Caddell implies, is founded on the promise not so much of real, but of psychic, gains. Those deprived of economic and political power are placated by the prospect of the return of the malign dreams of national, racial, and sexual domination once repressed by liberal politics. Some associate these dreams with the Moral Majority, but MTV is a cannier abbreviation for the substitution of dreams for democracy.

THE MORAL MAJORITY recalls the past, however falsified. MTV enforces minute-to-minute amnesia as new videos confront and replace one another. The regionally based Moral Majority emphasizes the God-given necessity of social divisions. The nationally broadcast MTV enacts these divisions as adolescent fantasies, notoriously accountable to no one (when pressed on the subject of their racist selection policies or sexist program content, MTV's management points at the audience and shrugs). MTV elides the past and its moral

The World of Reagan Youth

MTV. A cable TV service that offers rock videos, alternating with video-like commercials, twenty-four hours a day. When the MTV people first proposed to record companies that they supply them with free videos (which the companies had been using for some time as occasional promotional devices), some companies balked. However, MTV airplay proved to have a more dramatic effect on a record's sales than any previously tried means of promotion. MTV is now synonymous with rock video.

TOP GUN. A 1986 hit film about an elite school for fighter pilots actually run by the U.S. Navy. Top Gun (the school's nickname) graduates participated in the bombing of Libya. The film's rock score includes "Great Balls of Fire." It was directed by Tony Scott, who started out directing commercials, as did Adrian Lyne, director of Simpson and Bruckheimer's *Flashdance.*

BACK TO THE FUTURE. In this Steven Spielberg production, Michael J. Fox plays an ambitious kid from a lower-middle-class family headed by a pathetically weak father and (consequently) alcoholic mother. He time-travels back to 1955, where his teenage mother develops a crush on him that almost prevents her from marrying his father. Fox averts this catastrophe, bucking up his father in the process, and returns to 1985 to find his father confident, his mother sexually satisfied, and his family's status and income (consequently) much improved.

FAMILY TIES. Reagan once told the Boy Scouts that this situation comedy was his favorite television show. When it began airing in the early 1980s, it was a satire on the mores of the present generation of teenagers, as seen through the eyes of two former flower children turned middle-class parents. Their brood includes a Valley Girl type and the Michael J. Fox character, who worships money and keeps a picture of Richard Nixon over his bed. But viewer enthusiasm for the conservative kids led the show's creators to take the edge off the satire and phase out references to the parents' ethics and politics. The show's already high ratings soared.

MIAMI VICE. The first network show to adopt the dream-logic editing and empty high style of rock videos. One episode spawned a radio hit—Glenn Frey's "You Belong to the City"—which was subsequently recycled into both a video and a Pepsi commercial featuring Frey and the show's star, Don Johnson. In most *Vice* plots Johnson and his vice squad partner run down coastal drug traffickers. One of the many episodes with political themes co-starred G. Gordon Liddy as an ex-CIA provocateur in Vietnam (most of the vice squad members are Vietnam vets) now selling heroin. Liddy's menacing past (in case you'd forgotten, photos of Nixon and Kissinger hung over his desk) was mined as a source of chic. —E.L.

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referents, the better to sell reactionary clichés as bright ideas. In a striking instance of this sleight-of-hand, the *Top Gun* video garbles images styled on World War II films with technology developed in Vietnam, to approximate a timeless scenario for World War III. Meanwhile, the reduced emphasis on product names in its ads and videos makes room for the impression that MTV's new, improved sponsor is the future.

Kids who buy this future can imagine their way out of the economic and moral constraints that appear to hobble their parents. The teenage hero of *Back to the Future* time-travels in a Delorean—extreme symbol of free enterprise—to 1955 in order to improve his own chances by reforming his whimpering father-to-be into a real man, fit to hold down a self-willed wife and a high-paying job. The film's MTV and radio hit attributed his success to "The Power of Love." In an obliquely related commercial, the film's star, Michael J. Fox, takes a break from reading *The Power of Positive Thinking* to get a Pepsi. When he can't scrape up the change, a xerox machine on which the book is resting reproduces an image of a Pepsi can, which, magically, turns out to be all Fox needs to quench his thirst. "Love" and "positive thinking" have been used before as euphemisms for self-interest triumphant, but it's the magic aspect of the triumph that prepares us for something like the president's claim that the hungry have just lost the trick of finding food.

In a 1961 essay Raymond Williams saw advertising as a "magic system" in which fetish objects drew off those dreams and desires that exceeded any available social expression. He failed to foresee the eventual displacement of the objects themselves by the slogans and logos that represent permission for us to enter the fields for dreaming owned and operated by the corporate sector. Walt Disney, who dubbed his corporate enterprise the Magic Kingdom, understood early on that the real trick was to saturate the dream markets—commodities, resorts, movies, and above all, television—so that the corporation would begin to seem like a second nature. MTV, which diverts our recognition of advertising as effectively as advertising diverts our recognition of real need, is becoming the nexus of a saturation of the dream markets aimed at making advertising seem "natural," an ordained part of things.

The image of Michael J. Fox is among the most "saturate" of any currently on the market. He became a teen idol playing the neoconservative spawn of a 1960s-idealist couple in the television situation comedy *Family Ties*. Fox himself originally viewed his character as a "caricature," but decided he had better become a "role model" after fan letters poured in from young girls whose idea of romance was mutual upward mobility. Television exposure led to *Back to the Future*, whose success in turn boosted the ratings of *Family Ties*; the movie also produced a video, which boosted both theater ticket and record sales; all of which led to Fox's return to TV in yet another, different but related, form for Pepsi. In the commercial, Fox is never identified. His appearance is not an endorsement, but the further extension of an image which diversifies just enough to increase its share of the market, like the Classic, New, Diet and Cherry incarnations of Coke. The image emerged as the half-accidental reflection of political change, and carried its political associations with it (when Fox lands in 1955, Reagan's name is on the Main Street marquee) as it moved into the MTV nexus: the teen idol as dynamo of capitalism.

The extension of Reagan's image from acting to politics reassures an audience for whom the extensibility of an image is a measure of its value. His reliance on "charm," his claim to represent ideas he admits he doesn't understand, his avoidance of logical connections, recall the television juxtapositions of "personality," logo, and slogan they've come to prefer to developed narratives. One 1984 Reagan campaign ad consisted of politically inexplicit images of a prosperous America "united" by rapid editing. Following an advertising trend, the client wasn't identified until late in the ad, at the height of the viewer's emotional response. Chrysler's 1986 "Born in America" ad borrows, on Lee Iacocca's behalf, the Reagan spot's proven formula and its political glamor.

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The "Born in America" theme also underscores the debt both the Reagan campaign and Chrysler/Iacocca owe to Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." The pessimistic words and images of the Springsteen video signify less than its tag line, which works the same emotional territory as the other two ads; all three are selling something they hesitate to specify as either a product or a politics. What the viewers know is that they like the emotional certainty induced by tag lines, rapid editing, and saturation, and that the certainty is greater the less specific the demand on them to buy. This deliberate blurring of the distinction between seller and buyer allows viewers to see themselves as part of the spectacle, and thus to buy themselves back, packaged as a "national society"—"Coca-Cola Classic, Red, White and You," is one ad's neat equation. Spectacular stunts like Live Aid and Hands Across America evidence not only the vitiation of politics by entertainment, but also the new tendency of "mass practices" to submerge the personality by including it. The actual passivity and isolation of audience members become, in the reflected image of the media, the activity and solidarity of cheering crowds; that crowds are instruments not actors seems now to occur only to agents of professional actors.

Many Democrats, as the Caddell example demonstrates, are less concerned with exposing this fact than with seizing the stage. Lee Iacocca recently made a cameo appearance on the MTV-influenced *Miami Vice* as a parks commissioner whose few lines included the politically key phrases "We don't go for commercializing public land" and "I know how to handle a gun." Gary Hart chose to make his prime-time debut that same month on the yuppie-oriented comedy *Cheers*. Both Hart and Iacocca stumbled on appropriate showcases. Whereas *Miami Vice* exemplifies the Democrats' guilty fantasy—every week an organization of gun-happy Vietnam vets tries to restrict the flow of imports (cocaine, not cars)—*Cheers* reflects the Democrats' popular image as a bunch of lovable failures.

Yet neither Iacocca nor Hart could shake off an air of sheepishness as they made their appeals to an audience newly trained on MTV. Their embarrassment served as a handy reminder that transforming political participation into image consumption must inevitably lag in, or be resisted by, the psyches of all but the most hardened twelve-year-olds and the most mindless Republicans. That old habits die hard is another fact that Democrats might here seize upon as an opportunity, rather than fear as a personal deficiency of their leaders or followers.

When the conservatives themselves notice discrepancies between power and its new package, they move to close the gaps. The 1985 episode of the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) was generally interpreted as another conservative attack, if a frivolous one, on civil liberties. It might not be too farfetched to suggest that the politicians' wives who lobbied to institute censorship of rock recordings and videos also had an interest in making MTV more compatible with politics. If rock and roll was to be appropriated as the language of authority, its celebrations of the abuses of authority—sadistic violence, rape, white supremacism—were bound to become an embarrassment. In the article cited earlier, Raymond Williams similarly compared the support of 1950s advertisers for legislation restricting the promotion of patent medicine, whose "quack methods" broke the ground for the development of modern advertising, to "the newly-crowned Henry the Fifth dismissing Falstaff with contempt." Williams concluded that "Advertising had come to power, at the center of the economy, and it had to get rid of the disreputable friends of its youth." In the 1980s, power has come to advertising; accepting its claim to the right to improvise the facts is becoming second nature to us. To resist, we have to build on discrepancies, beginning with the one between the residual belief that our government requires our active response, and the present administration's contempt for that belief. □

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David Bromwich

Moral Education in the Age of Reagan

On Some Recent Proposals for a Culture Without Criticism

Modern conservatives since Edmund Burke have held a difficult position, at least in part because of the distinctiveness of their view. They defend the things of the past, and are inclined to respect history; and yet, it is a foregone conclusion that history will ratify many of the causes they set out by opposing. John Crowe Ransom described this predicament vividly in a review of Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, where he noticed "how conservatives when they return to power do not proceed heroically to undo the innovations of their enemies, as they may have threatened they would; but acquiesce in them, almost without a word of explanation, as if another chapter of history had been written irrevocably." Accordingly, much of William F. Buckley's reputation as the spokesman for a serious movement, or of Ronald Reagan's image as a leader in tune with America in the 1980s, depends on our forgetting that these men opposed the civil rights laws of the 1960s and have long been committed to abolishing Social Security if they could. All the way to their assumption of power, they argued for the retrenchment or repeal of a variety of measures that began as innovations, but which the suffrage of American opinion has preferred to keep as traditions. This, however, is a commonplace irony of the sort that all of us confront, simply by virtue of our existence in time. It is no more embarrassing than the liberal's frequent discovery that what the people need does not happen to be what they want. A more persistent difficulty, for American conservatives particularly, arises from their uncritical acceptance of the capitalist market.

For the market is just where the spirit of reckless innovation begins. It is an institution that cannot affect to speak sincerely for public virtue, or the common good, or any of the more local values that conservatives evoke to shore up against the tidal weight of modernity. The market itself has been the single most volatile and relentless force for modernization in our time. These are platitudes; but the ideologists I will be discussing in these pages, George F. Will and William J. Bennett, have said that they aim to bring to light the platitudes we live by. Given this conception of their role, it is noteworthy that they have professed innocence, and tried to assure the innocence of their public, concerning one main fact about our culture—its relationship to the social and economic arrangements of modern capitalism. This has not been the policy of conservatives at other times and in other places. It was William Cobbett's love of an older way of life that in nineteenth-century England informed his attacks on the emergent mores of capitalism. Burke himself disdained any tactic that would have appeared at once to defend an existing order and to favor the instrumentalities of rapid change. Thus, in his speeches for the prosecution of Warren Hastings, on which he labored at the same time that he was writing his pamphlets against the French Jacobins, one

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will find countless passages like the following:

> We dread the operation of money. Do we not know that there are many men who wait, and who indeed hardly wait, the event of this prosecution, to let loose all the corrupt wealth of India, acquired by the oppression of that country, for the corruption of the liberties of this, and to fill the parliament with men who are now the object of its indignation? Today the Commons of Great Britain prosecute the delinquents of India: tomorrow the delinquents of India may be the Commons of Great Britain. We know, I say, and feel the force of money; and we now call upon your Lordships for justice in this cause of money. We call upon you for the preservation of our manners, of our virtues. We call upon you for our national character. We call upon you for our liberties.

Hastings was an early imperial entrepreneur, in charge of the British East India Company's operations throughout India, before he was charged, by Burke's party in the House of Commons, with bribery, embezzlement, extortion, and murder, and impeached before the House of Lords. But here is his prosecutor, Edmund Burke, a conservative, arguing that a connection exists between the abuse of wealth and power and the corruption of morals. What Burke calls "our national character" and what he calls "our liberties" are not indifferent to the way authority and privilege are given by the Parliament to those who serve the nation.

I HAVE STARTED WITH BURKE because I want to detach modern American conservatives from their claim to a precursor as morally impressive as he is. They do not deserve him. Nor is the disparity solely a matter of intellectual and argumentative strength. Writers like Will and Bennett also define their subject—the defense of tradition—in a far more specialized way than Burke ever did. The sort of questions that the conduct of Hastings prompted Burke to ask, they understand in advance that we will not expect them to ask about an Edwin Meese or a Michael Deaver. To return to such matters often and insistently would be beyond bounds for a party loyalist. But I will suggest something more in these pages. By a careful consideration of the leading conservative doctrines of moral education in the age of Reagan, I will show that Will, whom I take to be a significant case, and Bennett, whom I take to be a significant echo, have proposed habits of thought to shelter the culture of the past from the influence of the social and economic arrangements of the present. They hope in this way to sponsor the revival of a strong morality and the preservation of a high culture in America. I will give reasons for concluding that their program is impracticable in its details, that it is founded on a shallow idea of tradition, and that it appeals to a superstitious belief in the dependence of a moral consensus on a shared religious faith. But I have to begin by observing that the premise on which the Will-Bennett analysis of culture rests is altogether strange and new. It is, that a culture can save a society from itself.

II

George Will is best known these days for his work as a television commentator on politics, where he has cast himself as an intellectual apologist for the Reagan administration. But he achieved his fame earlier and otherwise, in the years of the Watergate investigations and their aftermath. In columns for the *Washington Post*, the *National Review*, and *Newsweek*, Will mounted a consistent polemic against the liberal ethic of tolerance that he took to prevail in America. That ethic, he said, had given implicit license to the disorders of the 1960s, and culminated, in Watergate, with contempt for the law at the highest levels of government. Against liberalism, Will urged a return to an older tradition of civic virtue, which required both the inculcation and the enforcement of morals. Such a tradition was, he conceded, foreign to the history of American individualism; but it had better be acquired late than not at all, for what was at stake was America's survival. Many readers who have followed Will's progress in a desultory way must have felt that his politics evolved in response to a certain historical moment. At any rate his writings seemed to offer a reply—whether calculated or not—to the liberal and radical politics of the 1960s.

This picture of Will, I now have to report, was not quite accurate. I have looked up his 1968 Ph.D. dissertation, *Beyond the Reach of*

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Majorities: Closed Questions in the Open Society. It is a massive concatenation of notes, written in a lively middle-journalistic style, and, in its leading doctrines, indistinguishable from the mature writings of George Will. Only a few of his columns (collected in three books: *The Pursuit of Happiness and Other Sobering Thoughts, The Pursuit of Virtue and Other Tory Notions*, and *The Morning After*, the last of which is forthcoming from the Free Press), and bits of his Godkin Lectures at Harvard University (published in *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does*), have been cribbed from it. But the striking thing is not that points of continuity may be found; it is that the continuity appears to be of a kind unalterable by events. Will, at the age of twenty-six, writing in an academic context and well before what one now thinks of as the more thuggish manifestations of the 1960s, was already fully formed as the opinion-maker that he would become. There are several possible ways of describing a consistency as thorough-paced as this. Bagehot said of Macaulay that he had "an inexperiencing nature," and I think it would be plain to many of Will's readers in what sense these words apply to him. It could also be argued—and this is the way Will himself has preferred to see it—that he has both an unusually steady and a peculiarly unfashionable temperament. Perhaps the fairest conclusion is simply that, like many political commentators, he waited for his moment, and with Ronald Reagan's election his moment came.

"A specter is haunting American liberals," Will declared in his dissertation, "the specter of confident politics." And he added that "the kind of open mind the liberal favors is a political menace." The growth of the menace was partly owing to the liberal's reliance on familiar and misleading slogans: the conceit, for example, of a political *tabula rasa*, in the form of an "open society" or "marketplace of ideas," with which the liberal deluded himself that moral debates in society would tend to their own resolution. Will aimed to replace these untenable notions with some version of a consciously articulated public philosophy. If asked to specify a particular version, Will, at any time from 1968 to 1986, has often retreated to broad allusions to the need "every community [has] for an 'economy of intolerance.'" This means that the citizens of a republic ought to be interested in legislating morality: as a case in point, Will has sometimes cited the civil-rights legislation of the Johnson administration. But much more commonly in the balance of his writings, his own economy of intolerance has sided with such campaigns as those that would outlaw pornography, obstruct abortions, and qualify the legal application of constitutional rights to homosexuals. So, of a proposed city law in Miami in 1977, which would have repealed an earlier ordinance that had banned "discrimination in housing, jobs, or public accommodations based on 'affectional or sexual preferences,'" Will remarked (in a column he chose to reprint in *The Pursuit of Happiness*) that the repeal was "eminently defensible" since the earlier ordinance had failed the test of any law, "to point people toward more human ways of living and to shore up what the community considers essential values." The phrase, *more human*, is remarkable in itself, and the more so in that it appears to have been thrown in carelessly: a mere Christian moralist would have balked at this, as betraying a pride that may be a greater menace than the liberal's confidence. As an agitator for a public philosophy, however, Will's innovation has been to borrow the authority, without the humility, of the older moralists whom he seeks to emulate.

A COMMON FEATURE OF THE PASSAGES quoted above is that they concentrate their blame on tolerance. This makes for a coincidence, which seems to have eluded Will's reviewers, between his thinking and that of several radical speculators in the 1960s, many of them employed like him in university departments of politics. The Woolf-Moore-Marcuse *Critique of Pure Tolerance* appeared in time to receive an entry in Will's doctoral bibliography, and its ghost has had a flickering afterlife in his later writings as well. Like Herbert Marcuse in particular, Will has no hesitation in assigning to a vanguard in society the practices most worth fostering at a given time. Again, like Marcuse, he does not shrink from the sacrifice of competing and apparently harmless practices. A new name probably has to be invented to suggest the savor of an ideology like Will's. And yet, its

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sources are evident on any page he writes. They are not in the Founding Fathers (from whom he does not pretend to have learned much), nor in Abraham Lincoln (for whom he sometimes has a good word), nor even in Burke or Cicero. Least of all can they be traced to Locke, Hume, or Mill, all of whom Will condemns, in keeping with a general polemic against modernity which he derives, with a minimum of acknowledgment, from the writings of Leo Strauss. The theorist, in fact, to whom his thinking is most directly as well as obliquely indebted, is Rousseau. This seems to me to hold true in everything from Will's talk about civic virtue to his judgments of the naturalness or unnaturalness of mores which, in many post-Enlightenment accounts, would hardly come under public scrutiny at all.

Now, an indisputable fact about Rousseau's ideas of virtue and nature is that they are nonempirical. Indeed, the language of the *Social Contract*, the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, and the *Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theater*, makes every adjustment it can to place this fact beyond doubt. Matters like these are less certain with Will. At the point where one feels sure that one has captured him as a theoretical republican, he is apt to put on a different look entirely, that of the empirical and practical-minded observer of a common life. Thus "it is reasonable," he asserts in *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, "to note that we serve good governance by acting on the assumptions that underlie our moral language." Such appeals to ordinary language, in the work of other thinkers, are supported by examples of overheard or imagined speech, the muttered notations of a person weighing a difficulty, or trying to persuade someone else, or actually responding at a moment in a dialogue. The assumption that guides the appeal is that language—as the most subtle and flexible means by which we tacitly, but habitually, realize an understanding of life—incorporates and even anticipates the conscious sense of our relation to our world, our neighbors, and ourselves. Yet nowhere in all Will's writings is an *example* cited from ordinary usage. In him, the empirical-sounding appeal to "our moral language" turns out to be an exordium to a performance that never occurs. One may regret this chiefly on the ground that we all hope to derive instruction from evidence that is indeed drawn from our linguistic usage. There ought to be nothing mysterious about such evidence.

In the question of the legality of abortions, for instance, our language has no common phrase to suggest the constitutional rights of the unborn. It does, however, include expressions like these: "It *isn't right*, somehow"; "It's something I hope I never have to do, even if I don't feel easy about judging others"; "It's almost like killing a person." Our linguistic habits are, in short, full of the conviction that abortion is wrong. But then, and equally, one has to take stock of expressions like these: "A woman in that position is going through hell as it is"; "It's no good having the government muck around in people's lives." So one must add that our habits are likewise full of reservations about compelling a mother to bear a child against her will. If one pushed this experiment further, one would very likely arrive at a complicated verdict. In the moral language of Americans today, there is something repulsive, and something to be avoided, in the act of abortion. And in the moral language of the same Americans, there is something repulsive, and something to be avoided, in empowering the government as an interested guardian to assure the full duration of an unwanted pregnancy and the birth of an unwanted child. What the *legal* result ought to be of such a discovery, no sane person will now try to specify in much detail. For the situation is difficult, not because there is moral conviction on one side and tolerant immoralism on the other, but because our moral convictions make opposite claims at a great depth on both sides.

It is characteristic of Will that he should hasten past moments of reflection like this. In a 1978 column (which he chose to reprint in *The Pursuit of Virtue*), he was even capable of summing up the case against government funding for abortions with a remark that though the vast majority of operations "are performed by persons licensed to practice medicine, they serve not the pursuit of health, but rather the woman's desire for convenience, absence of distress—in a word, happiness." He uses polls as he likes, to suit his need of the moment, and

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without regard to the decadence of plebiscites. Here, then, are statistics that appear unambiguously to bear out the claims of a moral argument: the questions (we are asked to believe) were devised to register the precise distinctions between health and convenience, convenience and absence of distress, absence of distress and "in a word, happiness." I mention this faith in polls as one piece of evidence—we shall come to others by and by—that Will has been touched by the spirit of modernity in spite of himself. The dubiousness of his procedure apart, I find as an American that the lofty tone in which it is carried off has become hard even to describe. Butler wrote *The Way of All Flesh* a hundred years ago. To say now what is *for other people*, "in a word, happiness"; to say what is, *for all of us*, "more human": these accidents of phrasing point to a smugness more settled than mere complacency.

III

Statecraft as Soulcraft is a short and repetitious book. But there are signs that is has been taken seriously in the Reagan administration; and, since it comes as near as we are likely to get to a full statement of Will's creed, it is worth examining closely. Will announces at the start that he is concerned with the "slow-motion barbarization from within of the few polities which are all that stand between today's worst regimes and the fulfillment of their barbaric ends." As for the American polity, it is less well fortified than Will believes it ought to be as the home base of all resistance. The fragility of our republican life, says Will, originated with an intellectual error by the Founding Fathers. On their analysis of political society, "The scope of the passions is to be circumscribed only by the virtue of tolerance. That becomes the foremost (and perhaps the only) public virtue in a society composed of people endowed with equal rights grounded in their common passions." It may be replied that tolerance is not, and was not meant to be, a virtue at all but rather a practice, whose renewal takes the form of a daily wager. It is for this reason that the good of a society's decision to foster tolerance can be seen by its members, few of whom would claim across-the-board tolerance as a personal disposition, but almost all of whom consent to it because they are taught to generalize from what tolerance they do possess and from the benefits they derive from the tolerance of others. Still, this does not dispose of Will's larger point. He thinks we have overestimated the value of tolerance, and so allowed it to drive out other, indispensable, moral goods.

Let tolerance be replaced or, at least, augmented by some sturdier great ideas, from "a core consensus of the Western political tradition as first defined by Aristotle, and added to by Burke and others." Do this, urges Will, and you will be bound eventually to recognize that the maintenance of a society requires giving more attention to the souls of citizens than we in America had supposed. It may be useful here to observe close up how Will introduces his key word: "Keats said the world is 'a vale of soul-making.' I say statecraft is soulcraft." The word *soulcraft* is apt to grate on an ear accustomed to English words. It is not quite at home in the language; and yet, it is not immediately clear what foreign word it might be a translation of. But the mention of Keats is awkward for a different reason. When Keats spoke of the world as a vale of soul-making, he meant that it was a place where, with pains, individual men and women could distinguish themselves from others of their kind. Soul, for Keats, implied something very like self, and hardly separable from the body. The background of his phrase, now so famous as to be known even to those unacquainted with his writing, is therefore not pious as Will imagines it must have been. Rather, it is naturalistic and probably agnostic.

We shall have to make othe corrections presently, but this will do for a preliminary demonstration that secular morals have had a long history in the West, and have often thrived among the very people whom a casual historian trusts to fall into line as religious types (e.g., poets). A corollary lesson ought to be that the "core consensus" of the West is not singular but plural, with not a single tradition but several shifting ones. A tradition, after all, far from being what a few writers "define" and others "add to," is a process that begins elusively, takes on bolder outlines as it is interpreted both by those who admire and those

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who criticize it, and changes even as its authority grows.

What, then, does Will himself mean by soulcraft? A cultural faculty to supervise education in good morals, pursue a steady surveillance of personal conduct, and, where necessary, censure and punish delinquent morals. This, Will tells us, is just what was never provided by "the liberal-democratic political impulse that was born with Machiavelli and Hobbes." But, at the command of an impulse opposed to that of liberal democracy, "a purpose of politics" has always been "to help persons want what they ought to want." The republican author whom this sentence recalls is, of course, Plato (whom Rousseau exempted from his strictures against philosophy in general). But Will disarms the objection that such custodianship is strong medicine by advising us to think of it on the analogy of a pastor's role in his parish. "Politics should share one purpose with religion: the steady emancipation of the individual through the education of his passions." An emancipated individual will be less narrowly individualistic. He will be socialized by a knowledge of the mutual obligations he shares with others like himself.

So far, this is a familiar sermon; and it may be one that Americans are eager to hear several times in a generation, because they often feel on the verge of forgetting the degree of truth it contains. As a critic of liberal individualism, however, Will belongs to a special class. A moralist of the public good, he has also been, fairly consistently, a defender of the welfare state *in principle*. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude that he is in some sense a social democrat, or even a communitarian. He has a more exalted idea of the state than of the community; and he subjects democracy itself to a satire that he spares the leading bureaucrats of the state. Hence (what may seem surprising in so severe a moralist) his exorbitant admiration for Henry Kissinger, the most successful antidemocratic statesman of our time—the style of whose memoirs Will compared to the style of Monet, and praised for covering "a large canvas with small strokes that have a remarkable cumulative effect." A critic, then, of liberalism, democracy, and the forms of solidarity that have made the welfare state attractive to its less eccentric advocates; a believer in the necessity of "soulcraft," and yet a very limited believer, according to the low-church style of the age, in the necessity of a revived Christian orthodoxy to augment the powers of the state: we have only begun to describe Will's politics, but what are we describing? He is, it seems to me, a paternalist, in the sense of the word defined by George Kateb: a holder of the view "that the state is expected to remain indifferent to no sort of behavior, no matter how private, but must endorse what it does not penalize, and become the moral parent and preceptor of otherwise wayward, weak, self-indulgent, or stubbornly transgressive creatures."

The slightest of pretexts will often serve for Will to give a paternalist emphasis to his usual idea of tradition. In *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, for example, he quotes Keynes to the effect that in the long run we are all dead. Will comments: "The author of that sentiment, Keynes, was, of course, childless." This is not just a matter of wily sarcasm—though, if one tries the experiment of imagining the same

Let Them Eat Caviar

The following is excerpted from a cable sent to Arthur Gelb, deputy managing editor of the *New York Times*, by Patricia Wells, a food writer in Paris. Gelb seems to have asked Wells to look into the impact of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on the gourmet food market.

I've thoroughly checked into the situation on "radioactive" caviar, foie gras, snails, frog legs, etc. For many reasons, there is no big story here. The French have blocked the import of foie gras, frog legs, and snails from Eastern Europe. (. . . until the end of this week). . . . If the nuclear disaster had occurred before Christmas time, when about 80 percent of the foie gras is imported and consumed, it would have been another story. Also, am pretty well convinced that the caviar is safe, for the spring catch was in the tins at time of the disaster. Because there is so little information coming out of Eastern Europe on the subject, no one here seems to have a clue as to long range effects, but I'll continue to follow the story in case something develops.

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retort in a column by Buckley, one may decide that it includes an element of that. But Will has in view an argument about the enforcement of morals that transcends such local skirmishes. "Parents," he says, continuing the exegesis of Keynes's quip, "do not think that way. The great conservatizing experience is having children." For by having them, adults learn "how much this most important of social tasks is a task of transmission. Parents and schools are primary instruments of transmitting." *Transmission*, Will's term for the imitative (not inventive) continuity of a tradition, involves the pouring of a contained substance into a new container. The word seems to call attention to itself; and I ask leave here for a digression. At the university where I teach, there is a member of the faculty who greets a debate on almost any question by intoning a version of the following litany: "A university is an institution that exists for the creation, transmission, and preservation of knowledge, and for these tasks alone." I have found these words a calming and at times an almost sedative influence on my moods, but in lapses of attention I sometimes meditate a plausible extension of the ritual formula. I want to say, "The creation, transmission, preservation—and destruction of knowledge"; for, of course, knowledge does now and then escape from our tradition, never to return again. This was what happened to the phlogiston theory concerning the elementary matter once supposed to have caused fire. Until it was replaced by something else, phlogiston held the field, it was thoroughly preserved and transmitted. Whereas now, for students who know about it at all, it holds interest only as a dead idea. The same is true of the theory of natural law: roughly speaking, the belief that our moral obligations to our neighbors and to other persons are true, and not only right and binding, because they were engraved on our hearts by God. Many popular writers like Will, but many academic scholars too, are afraid that morality will be smashed to atoms if natural law ceases to be credited; and they are therefore even willing to cultivate orthodoxies they do not share, as a superstitious outwork of faith. The mistake of such writers is that they underrate the inertia—or, to put it more eulogistically, the interest in order, and the attachment to a common routine—which may be inseparable from human life under every form of government except the most extreme tyrannies. It follows that our moral obligations to each other may not require the aid of natural law theories, any more than the making of fire required the aid of the phlogiston theory. If this is so, what Will takes to be the very core of a tradition of *conduct*, and therefore the foundation of the free polities of the West, is in fact as dispensable as the Gothic extravagance of flying buttresses in architecture.

IN WILL'S THEORY OF CULTURE, our ideas, if rightly presented and candidly received, will exhibit a behavior as regular as that of a genetic code transmitted under ideal laboratory conditions. The assurance he wants from his idea of transmission is visible at times in small traits of style, as when he writes that a constitution "presupposes efforts to predispose rising generations to the 'views' and habits and dispositions that underlie institutional arrangements." Burke, who believed that "art is man's nature," would have agreed with this sentence, but would also have wanted to turn it around. Our habits and dispositions do underlie institutional arrangements; but those arrangements also underlie our habits and dispositions. Our virtues, such as they are, flourish in a place, and do not exist before in any conceivable place. This brings us to another curious detail of the same remark, the self-conscious insistence of its *pre*'s: the constitution "presupposes efforts to predispose rising generations. . . ." Only ponderous constructions like these suffice to give Will the sanction he demands. But why? A problem for any constitutional government, and a problem Will would like to evade, is that its conditions at a given time may actually help to decide the "polity's frame of mind." The latter is not entirely separable from its frame of body. At the present moment, for example, there is an unprecedented danger that a generation of Americans will be made permanently cynical, and overlook the things that have been and remain most admirable in our social arrangements, all because an ethic of greed, which they rightly associate with Ronald Reagan, has absorbed or else repelled them but in any case has relieved them of the obliga-

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tion to think. When they watch this president on television and see him gift-wrap lies (Our Founding Fathers the Terrorists), dissolve facts (the very existence of Americans who cannot find work), smile and forge ahead, they can hardly still rely on presuppositions and predispositions for guidance. Their leading question becomes, whether this man will finally succeed in educating all of us down to his level; and, if so, what adaptations we shall have to make.

As one inquires further into the character of Will's paternalism, its sharper features seem to recede and grow vague in the middle distance. Keen as his instincts are, on the track of any liberal cant-term, he falls here into the cant of the age by exhorting us to heed well the true worth of (unworldly riches? friendship? learning? no, none of these, but)—"Excellence." I do not rise to attack excellence. But I cannot help observing that it looks like an effort to split the difference between the old virtues—prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice—and a native utilitarianism that reserves its highest position for the spirit of self-advancing enterprise. Of course, Will writes in a nobler strain: "The abandonment of soulcraft was an abandonment of a pursuit of excellence." And maybe, after all, the native overtones are merely incidental. Maybe we are back with the original paternalist, the author of *The Republic*. The virtue (excellence) of a knife is to cut; the virtue (excellence) of a dog is to hunt or watch; likewise the virtue of a human being is to be more human: a phrase, as we have already seen, which Will felt confident of his power to interpret and which, taken literally, meant the state of being *heterosexual* and *not childless*. "A society," he now continues, "that has no closed questions cannot count on remaining an open society. Citizenship is a state of mind. A completely and permanently open mind will be an empty mind—if it is a mind at all. A mind cannot be shapeless; it must be moulded." And the jeremiad, for it no longer has even the form of an argument, ends by asserting: " 'he who moulds public sentiments goes deeper than he who enacts statutes and pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed.' " Though these last sentences appear in quotation marks, they are incorporated in Will's argument almost as if they were his, and it is left to a reader of his endnotes to discover that they come from Lincoln's first debate with Douglas. I will try to suggest what the words are likely to have meant to Lincoln. But first, it is necessary to surmise what they are likely to have meant to Will.

RECALL THAT IN WILL'S idea of political education, the docility of a good citizen is such that he may be compared to a vessel that needs only to be filled. (If, instead of instructing a citizen in political life, one wanted to teach him how to play a game—say, chess—one would have to break the mold occasionally, since otherwise one would be condemning one's pupil to replay the same moves forever. Political life, however, unlike chess, is a serious business.) As Will peers into the mind in the vessel, he sees that it not only exhibits behavior but possesses an inner state. Now, this naturally fascinates him, from a censorial point of view: so much so that the subject of his argument seems to change without his noticing it. It began by having to do with the necessity of calling some questions closed. But it has come to center on a different concern altogether, the naturalness of regarding citizenship as a state of mind. The sentence from Lincoln which Will quoted without attribution, as part of the Mind of the West, related in its context not to the psychological process by which minds are closed, but to the social recognition by which debates on certain issues are *implicitly foreclosed*. Burke's whole philosophy was a continuous lesson in how that happens, and in why we ought to care about how it happens. Thus, Lincoln was a careful reader of Burke, just where Will is an impatient disciple; for he saw that such acts of closure were not a matter of setting "ought" before "is." They were a matter rather of seeing how much of what is, how great a preponderance of the sentiments we know as ours, incline us in a certain direction at a certain moment in our history. Will pictures educators building a state of mind which in turn produces good laws. Burke and Lincoln pictured no educators in this sense, but a citizenry coming to self-knowledge, person by person, and seeing where the laws do and do not

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answer to a state of mind they hold in common. Decisions of this sort (it is part of Burke's and Lincoln's purpose to suggest) often take place in public, and not always at what has been designated a scene of instruction. Whereever they do occur, they teach us to move, in imagination, from ourselves to the little platoon we belong to in society, to a love of our country and of mankind.

IV

The confusion of "closed questions" with a regulated inner "state of mind" has marked Will's thinking all the way from his dissertation to his most recent columns. Indeed, he sometimes makes the jump in the space of a few lines, where it is impossible to miss what is happening. In *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, he commends President Johnson's statement that the Civil Rights Bill was enacted because "a man has a right not to be insulted in front of his children." These are eloquent words, though it would be difficult to say in what their eloquence consists: perhaps it is that they echo a sentiment which many people have always felt more deeply than they knew. The aim of the words was to recollect, for an entire nation, certain standards of conduct that its citizens held inviolable. But now, here is Will's comment: "The theory was that if government compelled people to eat and work and study and play together, government would improve the inner lives of those people." This could not be more wrong. Johnson's statement concerned the limits of what was conscionable in public life; it said not a word about what went on in the minds of citizens. There remains an important sense in which public mores and personal impulses are mutually influential. And yet, to portray this relation as constant and reciprocal would require a complete revision of Will's understanding of a healthy republican education. "Prejudice," wrote Burke, "renders a man's virtue his habit." Without pretending to the full aesthetic mastery of a Kissinger, one may feel that this aphorism suggests a nuance of the moral life which Will has never properly described. For it is always in the power of a government to help certain virtues to prevail, by encouraging some prejudices at the expense of others. In the instance of the civil rights laws, the American government did just that. A prejudice (the kind that makes us favor people like ourselves over people unlike us) was declared to be *legally outranked* by another prejudice (the kind that makes us think a man ought not to insult another man in front of his children). As to which came first, the law or the state of mind, the answer is probably in this case the law. Nor did the law work chiefly because minds had been molded. Minds, in some measure anyway, were molded because troops were called out to enforce the law. And we made the law, not because we had inherited an idea of excellence which it allowed us to realize more truly, but because we thought it was right.

Apart from a family tree of the fathers, paternalism needs to tell a story about the pertinence of their wisdom to the present generation. As we have seen, the fathers in Will's version are the tradition, all core, that runs unbroken from Aristotle to Augustine to Burke. How then does he account for the melancholy fact of its decline, conspicuous in the stunting of so many later, smaller branches? This part of the story begins with the unhappy invention of rights (as opposed to duties), of the autonomous self (as opposed to the responsible social being), and of the personal, symbolic, and disruptive uses of the past which received a first impetus from the success of modernism in the arts. All this is plausible, and a man like Will, whose favorite word is *pedigree*, would scarcely want to claim that it is original with him. The trouble is that he writes the kind of history in which ideas themselves have an agency, as if they operated independently of those who make or change them. Thus Will's bad modernists, like his good traditionalists, are always "contributing" to a project that comes before them, in this resembling the late-coming inheritors of a copyright. "Marcel Proust," he notes in a typical sentence, "contributed the idea (anticipated by William Wordsworth and others) that the self is a retrospective construct of memory." In response to learning cast in this mold, which is usually found in books with titles like *Perennial Problems: Their Cause and Cure*, it is fair to ask whether its narration follows the conven-

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tions of grammar. To what did Proust contribute his idea? A close scanning of the previous page will yield a general answer (modern life, the subjective impulse, the decline of the West); though nobody who had read and been moved by reading Proust would recruit him in this way to the intentions of a nameless global project. It is, however, of the essence of the didactic story Will has to tell, that it should reproduce the texture of its episodes in an undifferentiated a fashion as possible.

Near the end of the story, we learn that it holds a moral for American writers in particular. "We have had quite enough Leatherstocking Tales, thank you," Will observes tartly and primly. "We need a literature of cheerful sociability." Prescriptions of a similar pattern are, of course, mandatory in the work of a government critic, whether the republican mores he aims to correct are socialist or capitalist, and whether the state he serves is pluralistic or totalitarian. Why cannot American writers come up with something to meet the order? We *need*, says Will, a literature of cheerful sociability; and from each according to his ability, to each—but let us stop a moment at the phrase "we need." It occurs at the beginning of perhaps two dozen sentences (many of them close together) in the text of *Statecraft as Soulcraft*. But it is a phrase most commonly heard at the end of committee reports or academic reviews; and it is a nuisance. To begin with, it does not identify the "we" who need. That it has no intention of doing so makes it a hollow, pretentious, after-dinner nuisance. The truth is, all that we, as participants in a culture, need at any time, and all we can intelligibly ask for, are interested descriptions of our way of life, which set us thinking about how it might be strengthened and how it might be reformed. By contrast, the *topos* of "we need" always has an effect of bullying. It insinuates that the committee member, or reviewer, or professional moralist knows in advance along what lines of force, in what subfield or discipline, the helpful descriptions are likely to fall. Now this is presumption; and it finds its proper reward, however many "Hear! Hear!s" later, by the reward of inattention. It is (to conscript Will's favorite example against his favorite way of talking) an easy thing to say "We need a society free of racial bigotry." It is only a little harder to say, "The integration of blacks and whites is a necessary step to that achievement." But from neither of these statements will it follow logically that we need school busing. It is with culture as with society; and Will's pleas for a "thicker" American literature are, in effect, a course in school busing for novelists.

He encumbers himself with embarrassments like these from a motive that remains steady throughout all his writings. I mean his distrust of secularism. This looks at first glance identical with, but proves on reflection to be much hardier than, his almost conventional distrust of individualism. The two issues are brought together revealingly in a passage of *Statecraft as Soulcraft*:

> Writing in favor of religious toleration, Jefferson said something quoted and admired today: "... it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." Yet in the same essay (*Notes on Virginia*) he wrote: "And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but by his wrath?" How can religious convictions, or their absence, be a matter of indifference if the liberty of the nation—and hence the safety of his pocketbook and even his limbs—depends on a particular conviction? Whether Jefferson is correct about the connection between the security of liberty and the prevalence of a particular conviction is an empirical question, and perhaps still an open one. But the logic of his position is awkward, as is the logic of modern politics generally.

One may as well start by correcting a secondary but by no means trivial error. The "connection" Jefferson believed he saw was *not* an "empirical question"—not, that is, testable or open to testing—for the reason that no society, including ours, was ever formed by postulating such connections in a mood of experiment. Jefferson held an uncompromising belief, which he wanted to strengthen, and not to test, by carrying it into action. The belief was that in a free society, liberties could only be secure in the presence of a deeply shared common morality.

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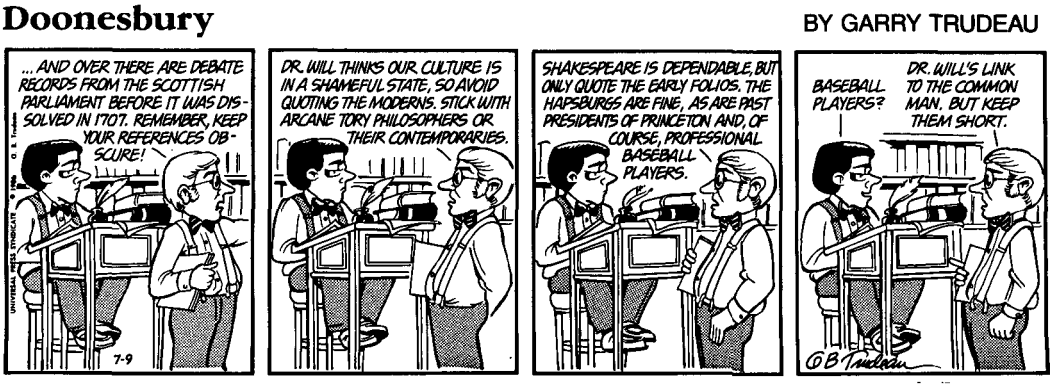
Because the only practical instance of such a morality in his time came from religious belief, Jefferson wrote the sentence about God's wrath which Will finds awkward for his position. But it was the regulation of conduct, more than the content of the regulative beliefs, that mainly concerned Jefferson, as his sentence about one God or twenty gods makes clear. And we, the beneficiaries of his thinking, are free to sustain his belief as we choose, in keeping with the best plan we can devise for the coexistence of the two goods mentioned in these sentences: the survival of our liberties, and the survival of our morals. There is only a natural difficulty, rather than a logical awkwardness, in trying to combine these goods. There would be the same difficulty whether we chose a religious or a secular principle of combination. Indeed, it is perhaps merely an instinct, or an instinct informed by a reading of history, that finally decides one's choice of one principle or the other. Like most consistent paternalists, Will has an instinct (which looks to me like superstition) that tells him morals cannot survive without the prop of religious faith. Like most consistent individualists, I have an instinct (which looks to Will like the blindness of enlightenment) that tells me morals can in fact survive without such a prop.

To frame the argument so may seem to reduce it to a contest between two irreconcilable prejudices. Yet it is striking that Will, as much as Jefferson, appears indifferent to the content of the faith he believes to be necessary. This suggests a germ of antipaternalism in his thinking, and its failure to develop betrays, at least, as awkward a logic as anything in Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*. The most curious aspect of this encounter is not, however, that Will's position is closer to Jefferson's than he wants to admit. It is that Jefferson's statements may themselves be read as harmonizing with a secularism which he only anticipated in part. The first sentence Will quotes is about the nation; the second, about the individuals who compose it. Of the latter Jefferson supposes only that they must share a strong belief in a common morality, a belief which religion alone in the eighteenth century seemed to support in the lives of most people. Does the same hold true in our own time? If so, to be a faithful Jeffersonian will mean advocating religion as a fact of private life; but this, it may be added, is already a smaller demand than Will and many of his party now make. On the other hand, if a coherent public morality can be sustained free of religious sanction, then one may as a good Jeffersonian advocate secular private beliefs, in addition to a secular public philosophy, and still suppose that one is helping to resist every imaginable form of social chaos.

Since Will is among the very few persons who now occupy anything like the role once filled by Walter Lippmann, Stuart Chase, James Burnham, and a host of others, one may regret that he has settled for a story as foursquare as that of tradition vs. modernity, virtue vs. tolerance, classical republicanism vs. American individualism. Still, most of his predecessors did the same thing. It is only when one looks more closely at Will's educational methods that a vague initial sense of doubt changes to something sharper. For a columnist even


Doonesbury
BY GARRY TRUDEAU
...AND OVER THERE ARE DEBATE RECORDS FROM THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BEFORE IT WAS DISSOLVED IN 1707. REMEMBER, KEEP YOUR REFERENCES OBSCURE!
DR. WILL THINKS OUR CULTURE IS IN A SHAMEFUL STATE, SO AVOID QUOTING THE MODERNS. STICK WITH ARCANE TORY PHILOSOPHERS OR THEIR CONTEMPORARIES.
SHAKESPEARE IS DEPENDABLE, BUT ONLY QUOTE THE EARLY FOLIOS. THE HAPSBURGS ARE FINE, AS ARE PAST PRESIDENTS OF PRINCETON AND, OF COURSE, PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL PLAYERS.
BASEBALL PLAYERS?
DR. WILL'S LINK TO THE COMMON MAN. BUT KEEP THEM SHORT.
7-9
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more than for other writers, mannerisms are an index of character, and Will's writing from the first has been notable for two: the ventriloquized gruffness of a downright Oxford slang ("Moynihan's basic point is bang on"), which inadvertently carries the Gatsby trademark ("old sport"); and the studding of his text with the names of learned authorities, whom Will brings forward much as an *arriviste* displays silverware, to dazzle, stagger, oppress, and sicken the visitor to his study, his emporium.

The hard-earned, half-found Anglophilia is innocuous, in Will as it is in others, though some Americans may find it rather a tease, like his thin smile and his walking stick. The pre-Montaigne style of enlisting, for one's own provisional cause, the sayings of any number of sages, is a more dubious practice, because it strikes a slightly dishonest bargain with the unlettered reader's piety about tradition. Plainly Will does think in lists of names, but lists of names do not think. "Jean Cocteau said . . .", "As Emerson says . . .": never mind what Cocteau has to do with Emerson, it is a commonplace occurrence for the reader to be led by Will, with distinguished and ill-sorted companions like these, through a pathless wilderness of *sententiae*, to emerge suddenly into a clearing somewhere near 800 words, at the prospect of a decided opinion on the advisability of sex education in Ferndale, California.

V

We may now come to a more vivid sense of the design of Will's methods by observing how they are brought to bear on a particular occasion. On June 18, 1978, he devoted a column to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Harvard commencement address. In that speech Solzhenitsyn had attacked the intellectual promiscuousness of the West, and raised doubts about the unconditional acceptance of freedom of speech in a secular society, as distinct from the conditional acceptance of it in a religious order. In a comment in *Dissent*, I remarked that there were great writers whom we could not use all of, and on the evidence of this diatribe Solzhenitsyn was one of them: he himself had not been rescued by his great force of spirit alone; he had been rescued by a principle, the principle of freedom of speech; and in proportion as we admired him, we were obliged to continue upholding that principle. Will took a very different line. He was disposed to appreciate both Solzhenitsyn's strictures on "America's flaccid consensus" and his proposal of a more rigid exclusionism in morals. This could not have been meant to suggest Will's assent to the politics of agrarian messianism that underlay Solzhenitsyn's criticisms, as a program well suited to modern America. But he did go the length of announcing that Solzhenitsyn's views were "congruent with" those of "Augustine, Aquinas, Richard Hooker, Pascal, Thomas More, Burke, Hegel, and others." Briefly pausing to cheer the warm, if distant, handshake between Hooker and Hegel, the reader to whom these names are not just names may return uncertainly to *congruent with*. That phrase works hard to conceal the wide difference between an analogical affinity which may be shared by discrete things, and a total identity in the aspects of things as interpreted by a strong-minded observer. In what ways, however, could Solzhenitsyn be supposed to have conformed to the views of any one of these thinkers? Consider his doctrine that great souls are formed by suffering against the grain of their times: that much alone excludes Hegel. Or his belief that the policies of a nation ought to be shaped by a cooperative understanding of theocratic edicts and the wisdom of the folk: Burke, and probably also Pascal, drop out of the picture here. Indeed, only in a very contingent sense can the remaining names be said to share a pattern of thought; we have to keep shifting about different features of all of them, to rearrange the composite likeness. This is not a manner in which history can afford to be written. Is it, nevertheless, a manner in which a popular education in the history of morals can afford to conduct itself, in the format of twice-weekly seminars on the opinion page?

What makes Will so weak a skeptic in an encounter like this is his notion that traditional culture, if absorbed intensely enough, can repair the corrupt mores of a republic, the way a vitamin injection revives the spirits of a depressed patient. This is what I meant at the start by the illusion that a culture can save a society from itself. Will's argument proceeds

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as if we could recover by cultural means the very things we lost in the processes of social development or decay. At the same time, his sense of the texture of social life itself is rather abstract: certainly no more resourceful than the average person's, outside the class and milieu to which he or she belongs; and positively dull when compared with the nervous inquisitiveness of a rival columnist like Russell Baker.

It is perhaps the same constitutional delicacy, combined, as it is, with theoretical assurance, that makes Will suspect our daily lives have no solidity, that they are capable at any moment of dissolving into something insubstantial and possibly anarchic. And this is where religion enters the scene: to complete the work of culture, by assembling the fragments and restoring the substance of our experience. "Mankind," Will writes, in the last chapter of *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, "has needs—call them spiritual, moral, emotional." It does matter what we call them; but soulcraft anyway embraces all three: "The soulcraft component of statecraft has one proper aim. It is to maintain the basis of government that is itself governed by the best in a 2,500 year legacy of thought and action—social arrangements known to be right because of what is known about human nature." The date Will picks as a point of origin takes us back to Plato. And there already is a first complication. What Plato knew about human nature—not suspected, but knew—included an idea of the necessity of slavery. Will himself would renounce that part of "the soulcraft component." But are we as free as this to alter bits of the cultural legacy? To the extent that we are and to the extent that we press our advantage, our self-interested use of tradition exemplifies the same pragmatic and modern approach that Will deplores in the Founding Fathers.

Here is the climactic paragraph of Will's peroration, concerning the definition of man that we Americans, on pain of extinction, are now obliged to relearn in full:

> When man is defined in terms of his nature, he is prey to tyrannies that frustrate his nature by making him subservient to the tyrant's will. But worse comes when man is defined not in terms of his nature but in terms of his history. What comes is totalitarianism, which aims to reconstitute man to reduce him to raw material for history's processes and purposes. Thus, for example, Soviet totalitarianism cannot be considered an accident of Marxism, the result of a wrong turn by Lenin or Stalin. It is the result of doing what Marx did when he defined man in terms of man's experience rather than his essence.

These sentences make a confused web of assertions to which I can only begin to do justice. But their most inventive touch is to have lined up historical consciousness and an interest in human experience *on the same side with* totalitarian politics; and to have lined up a theory of man's essential nature and of a stability that reposes outside history *on the same side with* conservative politics. This is an extraordinary error, and shocking to find in the last pages of a book of political philosophy (however condensed). If we know one thing about the totalitarian governments of modernity, it is that they have sought to obliterate all consciousness of history, and that they have done so in the name of a theory of man's essential nature. By contrast, Burke, when he wrote against the French *idéologues*, wrote above all as the defender of experience *against* theory—which was, as he described it, the work of "refining speculatists," "political aeronauts," "smugglers of adulterated metaphysics." To the dismay of the pamphleteers and columnists of his day, who altered their calendars the year of the revolution to begin again at zero, Burke spoke for history and nothing if not history. How then—by what feat of political aeronautics and smuggled metaphysics—can a modern conservative propose to write off history and experience together? They belong, says Will, to the totalitarian party now. But here again he takes a shocking, an extraordinary and, if one may say so, a *historically* false view. Leave aside the question whether Lenin and Stalin are the legitimate successors of Marx—as barren a question anyway as whether George Will is the legitimate successor of Burke. It remains worth saying that Marx, as the subject of active and not just scholastic discussion, was revised in the 1950s by several *anti*-totalitarian writers, on the ground that he sought to determine the limits of experience too narrowly. To Will,

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however, this characteristic alone would serve to recommend any thinker. To be sure of numbering Marx among his enemies, Will has to blame him for prejudices he happens to share with Burke.

THE EXPOSURE OF ERRORS LIKE THESE is a slow business. But what has distinguished Will's career thus far is the pertinacity with which he has survived exposures of a much swifter sort. He has sometimes appeared to flout even the decorum that urges a temporary silence in the face of public embarrassment. He published, for example, in March 1979, in the week before Three Mile Island, a resonant endorsement of the whole nuclear industry, a bill of health so comprehensive as to leave its critics on a par with believers in miasma, witchcraft, and other precivilized phantasms of pollution anxiety. Understandably, he does not reprint that column in *The Pursuit of Virtue*; but he does, oddly, reprint the self-vindication that he published a few weeks later, when the worst possible short-term disaster had been averted. "Events," Will reported, "have not contradicted most of what was said here about nuclear safety. . . . The record of commercial reactors remains what it was: no one has been killed and public-health damage, if any, is unmeasured." Was this after all the voice of prudence? Or was it rather a reflex sentiment of commercial optimism, in the service of a corporate good which the genius of public relations has lately captured in the phrase *damage control*? Seldom before at any rate, in the work of a republican moralist, have the ancient words caveat emptor been given so euphemistic a gloss. But Will's poor judgment in his Three Mile Island columns was an occasional and adventitious matter; and readers faithful to a given opinion-maker will pardon his faults until they come to seem qualitative and essential. This was not yet the case with Will when he wrote of a well-known leader, "He has relied so much on merchandising novelties that he has devalued the theatrical dimension of politics." And yet, the president to whom Will applied those words was not Reagan, but Carter. Even the staunchest of Will's loyalists, as they look at the theatrical appreciations of *The Morning After*, may be puzzled to reconcile the milder words with the grosser offenses of the past three years.

Just as I finished the last paragraph, a fresh example came into view. There on television was George Will defending the president's nomination to the federal bench of the barely literate Birch Society enthusiast and law school graduate Daniel Manion. Why does a man like Will venture so far that one may now reasonably charge him with practicing a double standard? I believe the answer is that he himself, these many mornings after, across the boundary from the Carter to the Reagan administration, has become part of the "merchandise" in the "theatrical dimension" he began by criticizing. To restate the fact in more familiar terms: he himself has been partly responsible for a recent innovation in American politics which seems to have changed republican mores for the worse. As a purveyor of instant commentaries on David Brinkley's "This Week," Will has been helping to shift the intuitions of millions of Americans; and not about issues only, but about the comparative status of elected or appointed officials and the journalists through whom their positions are mediated. Like his fellow commentator, Sam Donaldson, Will by his very conduct habituates viewers to a treatment of public servants that often ranges from intemperateness to insolence. The lowest habit that the new opinion-makers are adding to the customary practices of an interview is that of interrupting the guest without apology; and my impression is that in this, as in the assumption of a competence at once above the people and their leaders, Will has been among the worst offenders; though all, from Rather to Brokaw to Koppel, are disgraceful by the standards of American television journalism only a decade ago. Neoconservative writers have pointed out some of these abuses for interested reasons of their own. But they still keep a soft place for Will, and exempt him from every stricture they correctly apply to the rest. They take him at his word as a public educator on the neglected subject of our need for a public philosophy. Up to now I have been treating him in much the same way. Yet it is beginning to appear that in the years of Ronald Reagan's ascendancy, Will may have become, behind our backs and as it

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were behind his own, a different moral quantity from what he set out to be.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently carried a long article on Will, which mentioned his frequent and sympathetic meetings with Nancy Reagan, and reported that the Wills have the Reagans to dinner about once a year "just to relax." Other Washington journalists have prepared the way for this sort of thing, and anticipated Will's standard reply to challenges: conflict of interest is in the eye of the beholder. Even six years ago, when he arranged a party to introduce the new president to Washington, it could be said that Will was simply making the most of his contacts, and thus following a pattern which had never damaged the reputations of columnists like James Reston and William Safire. In one choice of his career, however, Will moved outside the norms of journalistic conduct. He coached Ronald Reagan for his debate against Jimmy Carter, then went on the record with praise for Reagan as the superior debater, without ever declaring that to do so made him a double weight in the scale, the first time as a participant and the second time as a reporter. This did not cost Will any of his syndicated outlets; and from the point of view of circulation why should it? What it ought to cost him is some part of the reputation he holds for personal probity and public virtue. For, if this act of connivance was unscrupulous even by the standards of the Reston-Safire tradition, it was beyond conceiving by the standards of a tradition Will affects to cherish more dearly.

In the summer of 1797, Burke was on his deathbed, and Charles James Fox, with whom he had broken ranks over the French Revolution, made inquiries in order to pay his last respects. Burke would gladly have seen Fox if he could, but he sent a message through his wife,

> to inform Mr. Fox that it has cost Mr. Burke the most heart-felt pain to obey the stern voice of his duty in rending asunder a long friendship, but that he deemed this sacrifice necessary; that his principles remained the same; and that in whatever of life yet remained to him, he conceives he must live for others and not himself. Mr. Burke is convinced that the principles which he has endeavoured to maintain are necessary to the welfare and dignity of his country, and that these principles can be enforced only by the general persuasion of his sincerity.

Will's defense, when questioned about his coaching of Reagan, was that he was wholly sincere in estimating Reagan the better man in the debate: whatever his own commitments, this was also his honest opinion. Yet he neglected every measure to assure "the general persuasion of his sincerity." It is the steady pursuit of good conduct, under the eye of such persuasion, where no division is recognized between public knowledge and private reassurances, that chiefly serves to distinguish the ethic of virtue which Will admires from the ethic of self-interest which in theory he despises. As Burke wrote in another place, of an advantageous private connection which he believed himself obliged to refuse: "The operation of honour (as separated from *conscience*, which is not as between man and man but as between man and God) is to suppose the world acquainted with the transaction, and then to consider in what light the wise and virtuous would regard it. I am sure such men would not justify my conduct." Will has come to ask himself less and less whether such men would justify his conduct.

VI

In turning from George Will to William Bennett one is conscious of a change of atmosphere in several respects. Bennett's position as the current secretary of education might have situated him to become an even more efficient publicist than Will; and he appears to agree at every point with Will's stress on the need to propagate a traditional culture closed to criticism. Yet Bennett is the less skillful writer of the two, as well as the less agile thinker, so that he often brings to light, by stating quite unguardedly, assumptions that Will has taken care to hold in reserve. Indeed, in Bennett's best-known campaign, his public sponsorship of a "core curriculum" for higher education in the humanities, the resemblances to Will's "core consensus" of tradition are so close as to warrant quotation in detail. "The late twentieth century," writes Will, "needs what the mid-nineteenth century had, a Matthew Arnold to

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insist that everything connected with culture, from literature through science, depends upon a network of received authority." This is the challenge that Bennett means to take up: he will address, he says in his 1984 pamphlet *To Reclaim a Legacy*, "the great task of transmitting a culture to its rightful heirs." To assist him in defining that task, Bennett assembled a "study group" of teachers and administrators with long experience in higher education, among them David Riesman, Hanna H. Gray, Wayne C. Booth, and William Arrowsmith. But, perhaps deliberately, Bennett leaves unclear the role that this group played in preparing the text of his pamphlet; and in any case, he tells us that he solicited contributions from another forum and by other means: "The general public was also invited in a newspaper column by George F. Will to send me their lists" of "ten books that any high school student should have read." Certainly, Bennett's stylistic affinities are with Will, too, more than with any of the eminent persons whom he summoned to his study group. In seeking to give a vivid shape to their idea of education, both writers equally tend to picture the process as one of *combustion*: "the fuel that carries a social tradition forward is tradition," says Will. But sometimes their figures of speech offer an alternative view of the process as one of *siphoning*: the aim of reading great books is "to tap the conscious memory of civilization," replies Bennett. In spite of their announced design, these metaphors imply just the practical, optative, and head-on approach to tradition as a business of technical know-how, which has characterized the more lugubrious American plans for the reclamation of culture over the past two centuries.

The latest decline of standards, Bennett thinks, has been visible above all in the humanities, which are now often taught "in ways that discourage further study." Others have argued that American society itself does not encourage further study of the humanities; and that the problem is daily exhibited at the highest levels of presidential government. *You can get this far without knowing anything*, is the message sent to millions of viewers by the ignorant old charmer himself. It is stamped on their minds by every improvised word he speaks, and by every stupefied answer he makes in reply to an honest question. To pursue this line of attack, however, is irresponsible from Bennett's perspective, which stops inside the school gates. In order to limit the grounds of argument, I prefer to concede the point, and will therefore confront Bennett's analysis on its own terms. As a main cause of the crisis in the humanities, Bennett adduces the negligence of teachers themselves. They have, he believes, lost sight of "life's enduring, fundamental questions: What is justice? What should be loved? What deserves to be defended? What is courage? What is noble? What is base? Why do civilizations flourish? Why do they decline?" Some of these questions, of course, have room for several more within them. For they have been asked, at different times, with implications so widely disparate that one may feel the questions were really changing, even if the words stayed the same. But it is the last two of Bennett's "enduring, fundamental questions" that give the game away. They are in fact anything but perennial questions.

CIVILIZATION AS A CONSCIOUS ENTERPRISE, or an unconscious process susceptible of conscious helps; a past accomplishment that has now become fragile, and the destruction of which may be hastened by the neglect of its inheritors: civilization in this sense is a concept special to the historical thought of the last two hundred and fifty years. It started with the invention, by Burke, of an idea called "Europe" and the invention, by nineteenth-century Russians, of a dream called "the West." Hegel and Carlyle fortified it with dramatic accounts of a hero who alone embodied the distinctive good and evil of a race. Now, Bennett's narrowly inspirational sense of the word derives from theirs, but at two removes. Talk about civilization as a matter of pedagogy began in earnest with Ruskin. It was popularized by Kipling and reached its height in the years between the two great wars of this century. "Why do civilizations flourish? Why do they decline?" Spengler, Eliot, Yeats, Pound, Aldous Huxley, Christopher Dawson, all took a crack at it; and one had thought that period was over for good. It is understandable that a revival of the cold war would prompt a revival

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of just such questions as these. What is scandalous is that they should ever be placed on a par with "What is justice?".

A civilization, says Bennett, is transmitted by its teachers—"transmit" being a favorite word with him, as it is with Will. Accordingly, he does not speak of teachers as "expounding" or "interpreting" their subjects. These last words would imply for the student a kind of *thinking* that Bennett wants to supplant by *reception*. Proper transmission, then, with proper reception, is to rescue from utter decadence a pedagogy which, at present, offers students a choice between two unpleasant extremes. It can be "lifeless or tendentious, mechanical or ideological." These make a curious pair of antitheses, as Bennett himself appears to recognize later on, when he writes that teachers "cannot be dispassionate about the works they teach." If we take this last remark as somehow consistent with the descriptions cited above, we arrive at a distinct but perplexing sense of Bennett's proposals. Teaching is to be passionate in some way, but tending to no conclusion, and least of all an ideological one. As to why we need a revival of the humanities at all—let alone a revival so carefully enclosed and supervised—Bennett gives a familiar justification for his appeal. He is disturbed by the narrowness with which students today regard their future vocations (an attitude that can hardly be called either passionate or ideological). They are "preoccupied (even obsessed) with vocational goals at the expense of broadening the intellect."

But whose fault is this? Bennett wants very much not to blame it on the social and economic arrangements that have made a career in a large corporation appear almost inevitable to any student who cherishes worldly ambitions for himself. Such a student naturally wonders what a few books of history, or literature, or philosophy can do for his earnings. Whose then is the failure of nerve? Bennett wants to say: the modern liberal's or radical's. Involved, as he is here, in a difficult tactical maneuver, he travels lightly and talks in code, and we shall have to interpret him as we can.

IT WOULD SEEM TO FOLLOW FROM Bennett's analysis that we ought to demand, for the sake of our culture, a broader and deeper education in the humanities, however that may be brought about. Yet at this point Bennett seems to stop short: "I must emphasize," he warns, "that our aim is not to argue for more majors in the humanities, but to state as emphatically as we can that the humanities should have a place in the education of all." If one were to try to parse this complex of intentions, the result would perhaps be something like, "Stimulate them with the humanities, but not too much!" (Or, "A place for the humanities, and the humanities in their place.") Having stepped forward so boldly, why does Bennett now step back so timidly? One may read him as enforcing a constraint dictated in part by a rational sense of limits. Yet, as the clause about the numbers of majors suggests, in doing so he aimed for a conclusion altogether congenial with the spirit of humanistic consumerism. And that is a spirit full of concessions. Of course, it says, we still need more personal injury lawyers; more real estate developers; more copy writers for public relations firms; more cosmopolitan influence peddlers. But please, while you are transmitting on their frequency, at least fill their heads with the right names to drop at cocktail parties. It would be shallow to suppose that Bennett sympathizes with this point of view. But, in his present position, serving the people whom he serves, he is cautious not to offend those who do.

ONCE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS of the crisis have been safely nullified, Bennett's story about liberals and radicals can go into full swing. In his account there have been two separate phases of our decline. These are, "ideology" and "subjectivity," and he calls them opposite poles. But the description is, as we shall see, slightly disingenuous. For Bennett does not believe that ideology and subjectivity are the twin perils of a single epoch. Rather, subjectivity came first and prepared the way: it is, in effect, the liberal parent of a radical child. Bennett will say as much when he feels sure of a familiar and appreciative audience. In *To Reclaim a Legacy*, published for general distribution by the National Endowment for the Humanities, he adopts a more diplomatic tone. He tells us that his "study group"—by speak-

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ing in whose name, Bennett leads us to believe that he sought their permission for every statement—were "alarmed by the tendency of some humanities professors to present their subjects in a tendentious, ideological manner. Sometimes," he continues, "the humanities are used as if they were the handmaiden of ideology, subordinated to particular prejudices and valued or rejected on the basis of their relation to a certain social stance." But, "at the other extreme, the humanities are declared to have no inherent meaning because all meaning is subjective and relative to one's own perspective. There is no longer agreement on the value of historical facts, empirical evidence, or even rationality itself." As one who believes in the value of historical facts, and who knows that the facts say nothing without a perspective, I will try to explain more clearly than Bennett what is at issue here.

Let us start by accepting Bennett's premise that "the highest purpose of reading is to be in the company of great souls." Further, let us, in imagination, place ourselves in that company. Finally let us take note of the respect we feel for, but also the distance we feel from, a revered presence we will never wholly come to know. Well, but what then? We can watch the company hold a colloquium among themselves, in a language foreign to ours, and with sounds as strange as those of any conversation from which we have been excluded. Or we can try to join the company (deferentially still, it goes without saying); and ask them questions, with the aim of learning something; and even give replies, in the hope of suggesting an unexpected counter-statement. This has always been one convincing picture—it is at any rate an old picture—of what happens in education. But once we join a conversation like this, we necessarily work in a medium that includes prejudices (ours, and those of the company) and that yields perspectives (determined by our time as well as theirs). When we try to make sense of the ideas that form such a perspective, we may generalize about them by speaking of "ideology." There is, as all teachers know, an educational use of ideology and a repressive use of it. The mark of the former is that it assumes something may be learned from the past; the mark of the latter is that it is concerned only with framing a rebuke to the past. In Bennett's view, however, both of these practices are equally vicious, since they license the same elementary act of irreverence. They allow us to join the company in a conversation. Somehow, Bennett has concluded that the move from listening to joining is also a move from impartiality to bias.

VII

To help decode the more abstract features of Bennett's program in *To Reclaim a Legacy*, I have found it useful to compare the sometimes evasive language of that document with the always forthright language of his recent speech, "In Defense of the Common Culture." This was an address given by Bennett on May 15, 1986 to the American Jewish Committee in Washington, D.C. If I have interpreted the argument rightly, it not only supplies some of the missing details of his educational policy, it also suggests that a strong motive of the policy from the start has been a reaction against the radical politics of the 1960s. Already in *To Reclaim a Legacy*, Bennett had noted that "intellectual authority" in the 1960s "came to be replaced by intellectual relativism as a guiding principle of the curriculum. . . . We began to see colleges listing their objectives as teaching such skills as reading, critical thinking and awareness of other points of view." Bennett, in short, already treated the adoption of these ends—reading, critical thinking, and an awareness of other points of view—as more or less catastrophic, and likely in themselves to induce an adversarial relationship to authority. But the same theme is resumed less temperately in his American Jewish Committee speech. "Campus radicals," he says there, "nowadays tend to see the university as a kind of fortress at war with society, an arsenal whose principal task is to raise 'revolutionary consciousness,' frustrate the government, discredit authority and promote a radical transformation of society." The key word is *nowadays*. It was written in 1986, by a sentient being, a reader of the newspapers, the secretary of education of the United States. The 1960s are a nightmare from which Bennett cannot awake. However becalmed the life may be on campuses today, however many radicals of an earlier decade

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give up the *hortus siccus* of dissent for the *hortus conclusus* of Wall Street, Bennett will not rest content until he is cured of his memories; and nothing will ever cure him. I believe there is a connection between the obsessional quality of thinking like this and the proposition, advanced by Will and now seconded by Bennett, that civility alone no longer affords a strong enough sanction for the morals of a republic.

BENNETT IN THIS SPEECH argues that to preserve our way of life we shall have to inculcate religious belief by the agency of government itself. It is an extraordinary proposal and, therefore, its reasons have to go a long way back. Of the core tradition to which we can still choose to belong, Bennett remarks "We are part and a product of Western civilization"; and he cites, as earlier resting places of our tradition, "Enlightenment England and France, Renaissance Florence, and Periclean Athens." These were our precursors in coming to live by the ideas of justice, liberty, equality, and government with the consent of the governed, ideas which are "the glue that binds together our pluralistic nation." Here one may be conscious of a gratifying symmetry. Just as the morals that bind us to each other gradually congeal into religious doctrine, so the little allegories that describe the process of cohesion itself appear to harden. They began (in what we may now call Will, Stage 1) with a Burkean trope: "conservatism teaches the dignity of government that grows organically from the native soil." Then (in Will, Stage 2, which corresponds to Bennett, Stage 1) came the revised view of tradition as a capacious fuel tank, or a reservoir to be tapped. But now, in a still more striking, if also more puzzling idiom, we have (Bennett, Stage 2) tradition as a sort of *glue*; with the hint that here, as in the paper chains that students make with library paste, to take up a single link is to encumber ourselves with the whole.

Still, it is noteworthy that Bennett's list of precursors—Athens, Florence, Enlightenment England and France—adds up to a largely secular tradition. Why then does he not follow the advice of the Founding Fathers, and opt for an American version of out-and-out secularism? After all, as we saw when discussing a similar turn near the end of Will's argument, an American secular morality can be rendered sufficiently binding by the enforcement of a strong nonreligious consensus. To discover the reasons for Bennett's choice, we have to move outside the field of education and culture entirely. For his ideas have been shaped to fit the larger policies of the Reagan administration. Nor have they been designed, by conviction, in keeping with its politics of principle alone. They have likewise been trimmed for expedience, to help shore up its alliances of the moment. These are serious charges, but, as I will show, they are charges for which Bennett himself has volunteered all the evidence.

In his address to the American Jewish Committee, the secretary of education spoke of something even more important than our system of schools, something he called the "common culture" of Americans. That culture on his analysis has three distinguishable elements: first, "the democratic ethic"; second, "the work ethic"; and third, "the Judeo-Christian ethic." The division of the subject itself betrays a remarkable imprecision, like that of the baseball coach who split the game into three parts: first, playing; second, batting and fielding; and third, fear. It is, however, the last, vaguest, and most doubtful of Bennett's elements that occupies most of his attention. The Judeo-Christian ethic "provides the fundamental ideals that underlie our entire political and social system—ideals like respect for the individual, standards for individual behavior, and a commitment to decency and to service to others." After Will's thoroughgoing paternalism, this defense of individualism is almost invigorating. I can agree with, and indeed would like to live my life by, all of Bennett's "fundamental ideals." But I am uncertain in what sense any of them is Judeo-Christian. Perhaps they are if one adds, "in heavily reformed versions of both religions." Nevertheless, respect for the individual, standards of individual behavior, and commitment to decency are as much Roman-Republican as they are Judeo-Christian virtues. What for that matter *is* the Judeo-Christian ethic? Bennett is no help. It "isn't," he says, "something manufactured by the upper stratum of society in the elegant salons of

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Washington, New York, or Cambridge." By contrast, it flourishes in the common culture of "most Americans."

When pressed for details, Bennett replies that the ethic has to do with "moral imagination"; and "the moral imagination of most Americans is," in his opinion, "sound." This last word *sound* does much the same work in Bennett's analysis that the cover-virtue *excellence* did in Will's. As applied to moral imagination, the adjective "sound" is merely a solecism. Moral imaginations are not sound or unsound, they are alive or dead. To imagine a thing morally is an individual act and a positive exertion; it is not to be accomplished by sharing a condition, like a state of health. But Bennett needed to misconstrue the English language, and pay irrelevant compliments to the audience who stood him as proxies for *most Americans*, because his business on this occasion was not to educate but to raise morale. The year being 1986, our common culture was under assault by an adversarial culture; and "One important feature of this adversarial culture . . . is the theme that the U.S. is the incarnation of evil, the common enemy of mankind." Bennett went on to characterize the adversarial culture in a manner that more prudent conservatives have tended to avoid ever since the anti-Semitic campaigns of Europe in the 1930s. He compared its agents to a kind of virus: "Most Americans, of course, reject the perverted culture of our adversaries. . . . Our common culture serves as a kind of immunological system, destroying the values and attitudes promulgated by our adversaries before they can infect our body politic." Burke was at once less dramatic and more cogent when he conceived of this power of resistance as inertia. The very presence of habits, and a way of thinking and feeling to which people have accustomed themselves, explains, far better than immunology does, the ability to survive which their culture may exhibit even in the absence of their knowledge of its reasons for surviving.

AFTER SHARING SOME PLAUSIBLE evidence that our failures of cultural reception begin long before college, Bennett proceeds to render this demonstration pointless by urging a defense of our culture and morals by other than educational means. "Last summer," he recalls, "in a speech to the Knights of Columbus, I argued that 'Our values as a free people and the central values of the Judeo-Christian tradition are flesh of the flesh, blood of the blood.' For this," he laments, "I was called an Ayatollah." Whoever thought of calling him that was a wit; and the label ought to stick. Flesh of the flesh, blood of the blood: this is bizarre language to be used by the holder of a nondenominational office, in a secular nation whose pledge of allegiance omitted the words "under God" until the mid-1950s. What did they make of this at the American Jewish Committee? We must go slowly here, for there do seem to be further signs that Bennett's sense of his occasion was somewhat ill-defined. Students today,

Poverty Rises in Cleveland

Poverty has increased 40 percent in Cuyahoga County since 1980, with no signs of leveling off, according to a new study by the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland.

Of the county's 1.46 million residents, 250,000, or more than 17 percent, are at or below the poverty level defined by the federal government, according to George C. Zeller, the CEO planning research analyst who did the study.

The federal government defines the poverty level as $5,360-a-year income for a single person, $7,240 for a family of two, $9,120 for a family of three and $11,000 for a family of four.

The study, called the Poverty Indicators, was the third done in the past two years. It showed that those most likely to be poor are families with a female household head, regardless of race or educational level, and male and female blacks, said Zeller.

The CEO report was grimmer for Cleveland. It showed 35 percent, or 192,000 of its 573,822 residents, mired in poverty, Zeller said.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

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he informed his listeners, "may grow up ignorant of the role of religion, of religious freedom and religious faith in American life." Now, religious freedom is not quite the same thing as religious faith, however much the unifying phrase "role of religion" may try to make them so. At bottom, the secretary of education seems to be saying that the sentiment of religion in general is more vital to Americans than the particular tenets of a believer's faith. We have seen a similar thought framed by Jefferson for pragmatic reasons, and by George Will for reasons he insisted were more than pragmatic, but of which he could not give a coherent account. What all earlier thinkers on the subject have acknowledged, however, is just what Bennett cannot afford to admit: that religious liberty may, as a matter of fact and precedent, have shown itself to be at odds with "the role of religion."

The strangest twist of Bennett's reasoning comes at the end of his speech. Here I must quote at some length:

> All surveys show that most Americans today believe in "the father of all mercies." But, whether individuals give personal assent to a father of all mercies or not, the extra gift of our common culture is this: the mercies—rights, freedoms, liberties—belong to us all. It is the heritage of our common culture, grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition, that helps to support not just religious liberty, but our free society as a whole. Again, one does not have to assent to the religious beliefs that are at the heart of our common culture to enjoy its benefits. For example: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. . . . And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." Whatever one's personal views, the religious tradition at the heart of our culture does require, in our time, common acknowledgment, respect, attention, nurture, and defense.

When Bennett agreed to speak to the American Jewish Committee, what exactly had he been told about his audience? Was he under the impression that they numbered themselves among the believers in a "father of mercies?" (The phrase occurs once in the King James Bible, at Second Corinthians 1:3.) Or did he mean to suggest that these mercies included a protective tolerance of Jews in spite of their unbelief?

It is true that the rights, freedoms, and liberties to which Bennett alludes may count as mercies on a broad construction of that word. But then, one may well feel that one belongs to the "us" to whom they are given, without therefore supposing that they were given by the Christian God. Evidently, Bennett wanted to assure this moral but not Christian gathering that the founders of America associated the good of their way of life with a religious sentiment rather than a religious doctrine. Yet he does this by quoting, as an example of "enjoyment" without "assent," the famous words of the Declaration of Independence, which do mention a Creator and "the protection of divine providence." Into a very short stretch of argument Bennett has here managed to compress two non sequiturs. For, to the Declaration as a whole, the founders *did* believe that we must assent in order to enjoy the benefits of American society. But they did *not* believe, and it is a matter of record that they did not believe, religious faith played any important part in the assent that they required. On the contrary, they gave much thought to religious freedom, but left no provision for "the role of religion" in the forms of loyalty that they inculcated.

Thus, as someone who believes our common culture ought to be predominantly secular, I have a much better claim than William Bennett to be counted as a moral and intellectual descendant of the signers of the Declaration. The evidence is not only in that great document, but in the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist Papers, and in other works by the authors of all of these, especially Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton. The America to which I feel a strong loyalty began to exist two hundred and ten years ago. The America to which Bennett wants to divert my loyalty has been cooked up in the past few years, on curious occasions like that of the secretary of education's speech, with its appeal to a Father of All Mercies under the auspices of the American Jewish Committee. The heart of this new, fake "common

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culture" is a stillborn marvel of the ideological laboratory, with no utility outside the parlors of Heritage Societies. And yet "whatever one's personal views," Bennett insists, it requires nothing less than "common acknowledgment, respect, attention, nurture, and defense." All these, he must be saying, are possible *without assent*. And here I believe is an interesting problem for the modern conservative adepts of character-building. What kind of person is it who can attend to, acknowledge, respect, defend, and even nurture an entity from which he withholds his assent? I would think such a person not far this side of a hypocrite.

Difficult as it is, we have to go on trying (hardest of all where the new cultural scientists do most to make cartoons of our creeds) not to confuse tradition with imbecility, or moral soundness with moral idiocy. Ideas matter: Bennett and Will, like many weightier thinkers, have said this again and again, and they are right. It is because ideas do matter that it is wrong to defend and even to nurture ideas one believes to be deeply in error. For those who accept Bennett's truth about culture, he holds out the promise that "This truth will keep them free." Those who both know and assent to what they believe may prefer the older saying as the better one. The truth will make them free. It is not a secret that was found long ago but a gradual discovery that is still going on.

VIII

I have to conclude with what may seem an awkward confession. In the most general form of a great many issues that Will and Bennett raise, I feel a certain sympathy with their warnings. A common sense of the past is rapidly vanishing, from the educational curriculum as it is from the culture at large. More than any other agency of the change, the mass media have been responsible for the pace of this obliteration; and, even within the academy, their influence is growing every day. One result is the displacement of old books by new ones, and if I had to choose I would side with the old. But my reason is not that I regard them as "cultural capital" (to borrow a symptomatic phrase of Will's) or that I believe by learning their lessons I will be better able to protect my culture against reading, critical thinking, and other points of view (to return to Bennett's leading signs of decay). It is rather that books which have been tested by a lot of people for a long time seem to me precisely those that teach the most about reading and are likeliest of all others to foster critical thinking. They can make other points of view so vivid that even our shared life seems foreign to us for a while. Great books, much more than timely ones, suggest a detached and therefore an unpredictable view of our culture. Their good derives from their peculiar power to make us think, and the right use of that power is to reform, and not to console, the culture and society in which we are at home.

Yet Bennett and Will, instead of ever suggesting a vindication of culture along these lines, have preferred to teach the great ideas as a master clue to the defense of the West. The latter cause in turn has become for them, in a very confused way, identical with the maintenance of religious beliefs against the onslaught of secular ideals. Throughout their polemics, therefore, they are obliged to be reticent about, or else cryptically to disguise, the political concerns that preoccupy them both. In the body count of their mimic wars between the ancients and moderns, they have started and finished wrong for a visible reason. They have had to take the current president, and the culture that he represents, as a more than implicit exemplar of tradition. But he is the reverse of that. The greatest of all modernizers, the unexampled master and servant of images, the destroyer of the past and the somnambulist of memory: these are the terms in which he will be remembered, if a culture markedly different from his survives to remember at all. From such a future perspective the motives, as well as the judgment, of men like George Will and William Bennett, will be difficult to recover or imagine.

In one respect, however, both their motives and their judgment are intelligible even now. I mean the service into which they press religious doctrines as the necessary bulwark of an otherwise secular culture. This demand propels them to the outmost bounds of sophistry, far from their own sources in the Enlightenment tradition they cannot help invoking. But they

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take these risks for the sake of an ad hoc coalition of the mid-1980s that merges Christian fundamentalists, whose main political idea is that the Constitution needs to be scrapped, and neoconservative intellectuals, whose hatred of the left supersedes every consideration of empirical prudence. Temporary as the alliance may be, the reaction it exhibits is part of an enduring pattern in America. It remains a commonplace view now, as it was two centuries ago, that secularization cannot be had without demoralization. The anti-Enlightenment argument against America has always begun here. It says that we had better act as if we believed religion's claims, even if that forces us to do some fancy bookkeeping. But the reply of our native tradition remains what it always was. It grants that the state Jefferson and Washington founded is hard to live with now, as it was from the first. But the role of an intellectual may sometimes be to challenge the common view of things. As Jefferson and Washington believed, America's unique mission in the world was also to challenge it, by showing that a moral life could be established without metaphysical tests or sanctions. A conservative plea may now perhaps be allowed after so many words in reply to those who take the name of conservatives. Our constitutional and secular state, and the individualist culture that has reflected many of its complex qualities, are doubtless not the best we can envision, but they are what we have to begin with and they are worth defending today. □

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1. Michael Walzer

Pleasures & Costs of Urbanity

The shape and character of public space is a central issue in city planning, and it has often been central, too, in political thought, especially on the left. Radical intellectuals live in cities, think of themselves as city people, imagine the good society as a large and splendid city. Socialist and republican politics alike require public spaces in which a common life can be enacted—and such spaces are available only in cities.

Curiously, the city figured more significantly in the social criticism of the 1950s and early '60s than in the activist politics that came later. Civil rights and Vietnam, race and war overwhelmed our speculations about urbanity and its physical requirements. Paul and Percival Goodman's *Communitas* (cloth 1947, paper 1960) and Jane Jacobs's *Life and Death of Great American Cities* (1961) were much noticed and talked about when they were published and republished, but the talk faltered after only a few years. When Rayner Banham's exuberant defense of Los Angeles appeared in 1971, there was no equal exuberance displayed in defense of other cities and alternative urban styles. The left had, or thought it had, more urgent issues. (How long has it been since *Dissent* carried an article on city planning?) Yet thinking about public space and its uses might have helped us, say, to think about racial integration. Thinking about government centers, medical centers, and housing projects might have deepened our understanding of the welfare state and its discontents. Thinking about freeways, shopping malls, and suburban homes might have led us to anticipate Reaganite politics.

Public space is space we share with strangers, people who aren't our relatives, friends, or work associates. It is space for politics, religion, commerce, sport; space for peaceful coexistence and impersonal encounter. Its character expresses and also conditions our public life, civic culture, everyday discourse. We need to talk about this again, and though I have no special expertise, I will try to begin, drawing freely on the Goodmans and Jane Jacobs and also on more recent books by Richard Sennett and Marshall Berman—but on my own experience, too; for cities are, like novels and movies, necessarily subject to lay criticism. So, too, though less gloriously, are the deurbanized wastelands we have created, even in the midst of the city itself.

II

We need to distinguish between two kinds of public space. The two probably exist on a continuum, but for the sake of clarity I will draw the line sharply between them. The first is *single-minded* space, designed by planners or entrepreneurs who have only one thing in mind, and used by similarly single-minded citizens. Entering space of this sort we are characteristically in a hurry. The second is *open-minded* space, designed for a variety of uses, including unforeseen and unforeseeable uses, and used by citizens who do different things and are prepared to tolerate, even take an interest in, things they don't do. When we enter this sort of

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space, we are characteristically prepared to loiter.

Architects and planners write about single-purpose and multi-purpose space, but I want to emphasize "mindedness." It's not only that space serves certain purposes known in advance by its users, but also that its design and character stimulate (or repress) certain qualities of attention, interest, forbearance, and receptivity. We act differently in different sorts of space—in part, to be sure, because of what we are doing there, but also because of what others are doing, because of what it means to be "there," and because of the look and feel of the space itself.

My examples ought to be obvious to anyone who has moved around in cities. Zoned business and residential areas are single-minded, as is the modern dormitory suburb. The central city (as it once was) and also the "quarter" or neighborhood with its own stores and shops and small factories constitute open-minded space. The government center, medical center, cultural center, shopping center are all single-minded; the forum, the square, the courtyard are all open-minded. The highway—Le Corbusier's "machine for traffic"—is single-minded, the city street is open-minded; the green belt is single-minded, the city park or playground is open-minded; the housing project is single-minded, the urban block is open-minded.

We can take the contemporary shopping center, sitting on a highway outside the city, close to the suburbs, as the epitome of single-mindedness (the urban mall, when it is continuous with the surrounding streets, is less so: I will come back to this later). The shopping center is a place to shop, nothing more, and its owners characteristically resist all attempts to use it in other ways. The most revealing example of this resistance is their invocation of the laws against trespass to exclude political activity—leafletting, say, on their "property." They don't want the extra costs of policing such activity, but they also don't want the attention of shoppers diverted from their primary mission. The ideal shopper doesn't take up parking space except when actually shopping. Ideally, the shopper is in and out, or wanders from store to store only in order to stimulate the urge to buy—and does buy in the end. Buying is all; so far as the shopper is concerned, this is not a place for conversation or play but only for getting and spending.

Other examples: the fast-food restaurant is single-minded, the café or pub or cafeteria, where people are encouraged to linger, is open-minded; the motel or motor inn is single-minded, the urban hotel, with its public rooms, bars, restaurants, shops, and its ready access to the surrounding streets, is open-minded; the airplane is single-minded, the long-distance train or ship is open-minded: one can write a novel about what happens on trains and ships, but not about what happens on planes. The movie is single-minded compared to the theater; this is less obvious but the point is worth making: theatrical time and space, the intermission, the bar, the lobby, the theater "district" with its restaurants—all this encourages a longer and more varied "evening out" than going to the movies; one more often hurries to a movie and home again. The exhibition center, like most centers, is single-minded (one exhibit at a time) compared to the old urban fairground; the department store or supermarket is single-minded compared to the row of specialty shops—because the row is on the street, and the street is open-minded space.

The square or piazza is the epitome of open-mindedness. Here public space is surrounded by a mix of public and private buildings: government offices, museums, lecture and concert halls, churches, shops, cafés, residences. Some of these have single, some have multiple uses, but joined together they give to the space they enclose and create a vital and receptive quality. In the square itself, people meet, walk, talk, buy and sell, argue about politics, eat lunch, sit over coffee, wait for something to happen.

This is the crucial setting for urbanity: without the square, write the Goodmans, "there is no city. . . . There is no substitute for the spontaneous social conflux whose atoms unite, precisely, as citizens of the city." In fact, of course, they unite in all sorts of other ways, and for reasons that have nothing to do with citizenship —commerce, worship, pleasure, love. That is just the point. They are different people, with different purposes, educated by the space they share to a civil deportment.

The university campus is another model of

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open-mindedness, with its own squares and courtyards, its varied activities, its in-close housing. I am not sure what the appropriate comparison is here. In the night school and the commuter school this sort of space doesn't exist, and education is a more single-minded experience. Correspondence and television courses provide no space at all. These sorts of institutions and arrangements accommodate people under economic pressure, people in a hurry, and that is certainly a good thing to do. But the accommodation involves a loss of diversity and unexpectedness, of a certain sort of educational loitering.

I DON'T MEAN TO EQUATE open-minded/single-minded with good/bad. Nothing so simple: we need not be against airplanes or highways or even fast-food restaurants. Single-minded space is sometimes wonderfully convenient; we don't always want to notice or be noticed by other people; we don't always feel capable of civility. At certain times in our lives, at certain times in everyday life, we are and have every right to be single-minded, and we require space that fits our mood or enterprise. But the reiteration of single-mindedness at one public site after another seems to me something that civilized societies should avoid. I can't specify the effects of that reiteration, for the character of city life today has other, though related, causes—among them the causes, which I will come to, of single-mindedness itself.

But open-minded space has in the past been a breeding ground for mutual respect, political solidarity, civil discourse, and it makes sense to suggest that without it all these will be put at risk. Without it, as the Goodmans say, "our city crowds are doomed to be lonely crowds, bored crowds, humanly uncultured crowds."

But why should there be crowds at all? The real alternative to open-minded space is private space, and it is the (genuine) appeal of private space that shapes the contemporary city. Single-mindedness is designed to serve and facilitate privacy; it has no value in itself, and no one ever thought that it did (even the romance of the highway is largely the romance of the private car). The point of single-mindedness is career discipline at one end of our lives and home-boundedness at the other. The home, the crucial setting for privacy, is neither single-minded nor open-minded. Not single-minded, because it is designed to accommodate a variety of activities: cooking, eating, sleeping, loving, quarreling, talking, working, playing, raising children. And not open-minded, because the actual encounters and activities that take place are tightly controlled by the small circle of participants. Home is and ought to be predictable. Perhaps the best word for private space is Richard Sennett's "intimate." Single-mindedness serves intimacy, because it moves us quickly through the public, nonintimate, and unpredictable world.

Open-minded space, by contrast, competes with intimacy because it provides an alternative pattern of activity and encounter. These days it competes less and less successfully. The more privileged we are, the more quickly we move from place to place, the less time we spend in public. The ideal is door-to-door: private airplane, helicopter, limousine. Public space is degraded, first because it is taken to be merely instrumental, then because even the instrument is avoided by those who are able to do so. Think of the waiting rooms of the great 19th-century train stations and then of the way we wait now: the experience has been stripped of all grace and expectation, except for the dim hope that the train will be on time. Single-minded space, without value of its own, tends to run down. Technology advances, fashions change, the affluent depart; ultimately the space is taken over by those to whom society denies the comforts of intimacy, the vagabonds and homeless.

III

It's not difficult to describe the process by which this happens or to explain its reasons. Indeed, there are too many reasons; the process is overdetermined. What is hard is to suggest how it might be abated or reversed.

(1) *The first reason is cultural* and has to do with the success (or perhaps the development beyond the point of success) of liberal individualism—which is not merely a creed but a state of mind, a certain characterological formation. Increasingly, we conceive of well-being exclu-

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sively in terms of the self. The material realization of well-being lies in the personal or domestic accumulation of goods; the moral realization lies in self-understanding and meaningful relationships. Materialism and morality alike lead to the enhanced valuation of intimate space, the setting for private comfort and also for personal or mutual exploration. Public space, by contrast, requires what Sennett calls impersonality and role-playing: civility rather than sincerity. It's a setting for reticence and wit, not for confession. At home you can say to someone you love or hope to love: Sit down, sit down, and tell me *everything*; in the café we tell one another censored stories, artful stories. Liberalism breeds an expansive desire for comfort and closeness, useful commodities and loving persons, while an older republicanism, historically associated with open-minded space, provides us only with monuments and fellow citizens.

(2) *New technologies also enhance* the value of the home—not only labor-saving devices that make housework easier but also, and probably more important, the new communications media. Less housework might mean more time to "go out," but the new media make possible a kind of engagement-with-the-world at home: we don't need to go out at all. We can sit, safe and secure, in our living rooms or family rooms and listen to music, watch the news, see movies, plays, or vaudeville shows, tune in a political debate or a revivalist preacher or a "talk" show (where famous people, whom we cannot hope to meet, do the talking, and we are free to kibitz), watch national and international athletic competitions—with a better view of the action than the actual spectators have.

Any of these activities, passive though they are, would once have carried us out of intimate space into many different sorts of public space, single-minded and open-minded in different degrees, lobbies and halls and stadiums and parks, and led to encounters (at least, visual encounters) with other people doing similar or different things. The experience is less engaging, I think, when we are homebound, but it is also less trouble, less time-consuming, physically and mentally easier. "Perhaps," as the Goodmans say, "there are no longer real occasions for social congregation. . . . " Not true, of course: people still go out to concerts, movies, ball games, church services, and I shall want to ask why they do. But they also spend a lot of time "attending" these events, not together but one by one, as a locational series (separately, in their own living rooms) rather than a social congregation. And, increasingly, when they do go out, they travel in their cars, small pieces of intimate space, hurtling along the single-minded highway.

(3) *Shaped by culture and technology*—here the car has been more important than the new communications media—the concepts that have guided city planning and urban redevelopment in the 20th century have been largely single-minded in tendency. The reigning maxim is one site/one purpose: hence the "center" and the "project." "Modernist architecture and planning," writes Marshall Berman in *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, "created a modernized version of pastoral: a spatially and socially segmented world—people here, traffic there; work here, homes there; rich here, poor there; barriers of grass and concrete in betweeen. . . . "

Berman's list can be extended: housing, business, manufacture, government, culture, recreation—each has its proper place, cut off from all the others. Open-minded space is equated with urban disorder, the uncertainties of street life, the chaos of the petty-bourgeois economy. All this is to be banished. "We must kill the street," Le Corbusier said, and that is the effect, not yet achieved, of his "radiant city" as of Frank Lloyd Wright's "living city," both of them really anti-cities, organized to serve the private car and the solitary individual.

(4) *The ideological critique of open-minded space* has been paralleled by a social inundation: crowding, overuse, conflict. It would be foolish to deny that the planners and architects have responded, sometimes, to real, not ideological, disorders. Economic mobilization and the slow advance of democracy (at least, of democratic manners and a superficial "equality of condition") bring more and more people into available public space. And, what may be more important, they bring increasingly diverse kinds of people, from different classes and ethnic groups, into the same public space. Open-mindedness implies a tolerance for diver-

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sity, but in the past this has most commonly been a diversity of function and only within limits a diversity of people.

Lovers of urbanity celebrate the city's chaotic mix, but it is wise to notice that many of the most celebrated examples of urban space "belong" to quite specific groups of people. The forum and the piazza were places first of all for male citizens; universities are segregated cities of the young; neighborhoods are often ethnically homogeneous (like one of Jane Jacobs's favorite neighborhoods, the Italian North End of Boston); streets and parks are someone's "turf," cafés and bars are most interesting when they are taken over by particular groups of writers, actors, journalists, and so on. Insofar as this sort of possession ceases to be possible, or ceases to be secure, the space deteriorates. The unpredictability of open-mindedness becomes threatening. There is more difference, more tension and potential conflict, than people want to cope with.

Jane Jacobs has described how a successful street is self-policing. An unsuccessful street, by contrast, always seems inadequately policed, dangerous, a place to avoid. The same is true for parks, playgrounds, waiting rooms, lobbies. Without regular and confident users, they become settings for social, sexual, and political deviance: derelicts, criminals, "hippies," political and religious sectarians, adolescent gangs. All these belong, no doubt, to the urban mix, but if they are too prominent within it, ordinary men and women will flee as soon as they can into private and controlled worlds. Their flight carries them through single-minded space, which is subject to a similar deterioration and can come to feel equally dangerous. But single-mindedness is, at least, transitional and instrumental: we aim only to be in and out and have no high hopes of conversation or engagement along the way. So we avoid urbanity, move between the instrumental and the intimate, give up those areas of public life where civility is necessary but increasingly difficult.

(5) *What we might think of as the mass consumption of open-minded space* strains and sometimes overwhelms its financial base. Open-mindedness requires public subsidy. This can take the form of direct provision (squares, parks, sidewalks) or of maintenance and control. Sometimes it requires planning—if only to undo the effects of previous plans. Market provision is also possible, as in the case of the café (though the café is dependent on the sidewalk) or the row of shops. But enterprises of this sort don't seem profit-maximizing, and may require entrepreneurs who themselves enjoy the public life they facilitate. They are often bought out by national chains whose local managers are not trained for a similar enjoyment. Under contemporary conditions, it appears that commerce favors single-mindedness, which is easier to invest in and capitalize on, and which represents a more profitable use of increasingly high-priced land. Alternative uses and possibilities are uneconomic, rather like political speeches in a shopping center (agitation is only appropriate at the government center where taxpayers foot the bill). There is no obvious entrepreneurial interest in reproducing the civility of the old street and square (or, say, the spaciousness and dignity of the old waiting room)—except, perhaps, as luxury goods, like the first-class bar in a 747.

The truth is that open-minded space depends upon police, street-cleaners, waiters, conductors, gardeners, supervisors of all sorts, *whose wages it doesn't pay*. These people have to be paid out of tax money, and there is less and less willingness to pay enough of them. We try to accommodate ourselves to the supermarket model, where service personnel are reduced to a minimum. But that reduction is deadly for open-minded space: one can't strike up a conversation at the check-out counter or "hang around" in a parking lot. If there is to be room for conversation and for hanging around, it must be, so to speak, room with amenities.

IV

An overabundance of reasons—cultural, technological, ideological, social, and economic—and all of them seem to point in the same direction: toward single-mindedness on the one hand and intimacy on the other. But this can't be, and obviously isn't, the whole story. Life at home requires, if only for contrast, an extramural life; it is too much of a strain on intimacy when intimacy is all there is. Once, perhaps, it was in the interest of women to raise the walls

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high around the home, and to emphasize the coziness and comfort of domesticity, for they were largely excluded from public activities outside. But the success of the feminist movement, if it is successful, ought to lead to a new demand for space outside the home. Affluence breeds a similar demand: how often can one redecorate the living room? There is bound to be growing pressure from people with time and money on their hands for interesting things to do as well as for (or even instead of) domestic enhancements: holidays, travel, evenings out, "social congregations" of different sorts, places to see and be seen. People will continue to want to rub shoulders even if they are leery of actual encounters.

Certain sorts of single-minded space can meet this pressure—in their different ways, for example, shopping centers and cultural centers. But settings of this sort are most successful if they open out on alternative spaces or slowly come to accommodate alternative uses. The new urban malls are a nice example of the adaptation of the "center" to a genuine urbanity—though they have mostly been successful only on dramatic sites, like the Boston or Baltimore waterfronts. In any case, success points strongly to the appeal of open-minded space, with its easy access to many different sorts of activity, the sense it conveys of things to do and time to waste, and the security generated by consistent use over the span of day and night.

What has made all this possible is an interesting combination of entrepreneurial activity, local politics, planning and antiplanning—a market/political process that liberals and leftists committed to the city would do well to study. What isn't yet clear is the extent to which success, where it has occurred, depends upon exclusion, in this case by price (especially from the in-close housing that has sprung up around the new malls).

The real test is to make such arrangements work in more ordinary neighborhoods—or, in the absence of the mall, to rehabilitate the street. It would not be a great achievement to provide urbanity only as a luxury good, and chiefly for a homogeneous but transient population of upwardly mobile young professionals. The more appropriate homogeneity for a democratic city is the residential district, shaped over the years by ethnicity or interest. Years ago, Percival Goodman argued in *Dissent* against the construction of Lincoln Center. The buildings planned for the Center, he suggested, should be scattered across the city, strengthening its different parts. I suppose there are counterarguments. Certainly, Lincoln Center is very convenient for cultural commuters from New Jersey; it is hardly necessary to register the (alarming) fact that one is in Manhattan. And lots of people do come, creating, at least at certain fixed times, a nice liveliness.

Cities, indeed, need centers, but only insofar as these accommodate diverse kinds of enterprises and activities. Otherwise, they need decentering, for the sake of diversity. It is probably better that a cultural palace be located near a church, a government office building, a good café, an apartment house, and so on, than that it be adjacent to another palace—better at least for the residents of the city. If open-minded space is good for the people called "yuppies," then it is probably good for the rest of us. But are there enough of the rest of us, living in more or less stable neighborhoods, eager for the pleasures and ready to pay the costs of urbanity? □

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2. Marshall Berman

Take It to the Streets

Conflict and Community in Public Space

The Dialectics of Double Lives

KARL MARX, writing in the 1840s, developed a perspective that can help us see why modern men and women have a special need for public space, and also why the historical forces that create this need make it especially hard to fulfill. His 1844 essay "On the Jewish Question" tries to grasp the new liberal and democratic civilization that the French and American Revolutions have produced. In all states that have had successful bourgeois democratic revolutions, Marx argues, "man leads a double life." The typical modern man or woman is "split into a public person and a private person," or into an "egoistic individual" and a "communal being," or—here Marx quotes the language of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen—"into a man and a citizen." Marx characterizes this double life as a life of "political emancipation."

It takes no special wisdom to see that this form of freedom has severe defects. Marx portrays it as only part of the way toward full "human emancipation." Nevertheless, it is "a necessary part." It is only by going through this historical split that we can integrate ourselves into fully developed "species beings." Full human emancipation will happen "only when the individual man [*Mensch*—human being] has taken back into himself the abstract citizen and, in his everyday life and his relations with other people, has recognized and organized his own powers as social powers."

It is this modern, split, fragmented individual, living a double life, that is Marx's subject—these individual people who must do the work of putting their lives together, together with their fellows. Without the experience of radical separation, modern men and women will lack the space they need to grow into people capable of full integration. This is why Marx (as opposed to some other socialists, then and now) supports civil rights, both for Jews (as he argues in the "Jewish Question") and for everybody else. It is true, civil rights for an individual or a group involve "the right of separation." But it is only by going through the most intense separation and individuation that modern men and women can develop the resources to create new forms of solidarity and community.

The paradigms that Marx developed in the 1840s can still be fruitful for understanding life in the democracies of today. We still lead double lives, split into men or women and citizens, torn between private and public; we still dream of resolving our inner contradictions and living in a more integrated way. We know, as Marx did, that this can't happen without a radical transformation of our economy, state, and society; we also know that this can't work if it's imposed from above, but only if people come together freely to do it on their own.

In this political context, the idea of public space takes on a special urgency. A society of split men and women badly needs a terrain on which people can come together to heal their

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inner wounds—or at least to treat them—and advance from political to human emancipation. Of course, there is no spatial form that in itself could make this happen. But we can imagine environments that could help it happen: environments open to everybody where, first of all, a society's inner contradictions could emerge freely and openly and, second, where people could begin to deal with these contradictions and try to work them out. Any society that takes the rights of man and citizen seriously has a responsibility to provide spaces where these rights can be expressed, tested, dramatized, played off against each other. Implicit in our basic democratic rights, then, is the right to public space.

Americans are faced with special difficulties in trying to secure this right. Our Republic inherited no splendid monuments and plazas, such as were built by the feudal and absolutist powers that dominated Europe's past. (I will have more to say later about those spaces.) Our built environments have been created almost entirely by private capital for private purposes and profits. Nevertheless, Americans are at least intermittently aware of what they are missing. Again and again, since the earliest days of the Republic, there have been popular demands and mobilizations for public space. Sometimes the people are lucky enough to get Central Parks and Washington Squares. But Americans haven't been so lucky for a long while.

Michael Walzer's distinction between "single-minded" and "open-minded" space is especially fruitful for understanding the politics of public space in the U.S.A. Walzer's "single-minded" metaphor can help explain what makes our post-World War II public spaces so sterile and empty, why they have been gold mines for owners and developers but ghost towns for the public. And his "open-minded" metaphor can help us imagine what kind of spaces we really need, so that we can fight for them effectively in the generation to come.

If I have an argument with Walzer, it is that he has not adequately thought through the consequences of his own values. Specifically, his vision of open-minded space isn't open enough. I want to open it up some more, to expand our vision of what public space should be. I want to bring in all sorts of people, impulses, ideas, and modes of behavior that Walzer leaves out, to unfold dimensions of openness that he doesn't seem to see. My critique of Walzer and my own vision of open space will emerge in two parts: first, openness to modern individualism; second, openness to the urban poor. I will be promoting an ideal of open space that Montesquieu was the first to identify, and to celebrate, on the streets of Paris after the death of Louis XIV: an environment where

> Dissimulation, that art so practiced and so necessary among us, is unknown. . . . Everything is said, everything is seen, everything can be heard. The heart shows itself as openly as the face.[1]

A Place in the Sun: Modern Individualism

THERE IS A DISTINCTIVE STRAIN in Walzer's argument that seems to grow out of a paradoxical but persistent tradition in modern thought. This tradition professes an Olympian disdain for modern life as a whole, and dreams nostalgically of a golden age of Greek or Roman antiquity. When the nostalgia takes a political form, it often focuses on idealized, magnificent public spaces where ancient men are said to have lived on a lofty plane of civic virtue. (This tradition doesn't say much about where, or how, ancient women lived.) Moderns, by contrast, are seen as petty souls mired hopelessly in trivial pursuits.

When Walzer works in this tradition, his argument shifts from an indictment of capitalism for depriving the people of public space, and turns into an indictment of people for not wanting public space or caring about it. Thus, he says, modern men and women have been deformed by "the triumph of liberal individualism—which is not merely a creed but a state of mind, a . . . characterological formation." People with this character can imagine and pursue happiness only in narrowly private forms. They seek material comfort, intimacy, love, "personal and mutual exploration."

Walzer seems to write off all these needs as

[1] "A Persian on the Streets of Paris," in Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, 1721.

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exclusive private affairs. He sees his contemporaries as having fallen from the heights of "older republicanism," which left us a noble heritage of "monuments and fellow-citizens." The men of those monumental times could be at home in public space because they were supposedly free from the press of personal needs that obsess us. They understood that public life "requires impersonality and role-playing, civility, not sincerity, reticence and wit, not confession." But we moderns are unable to leave our selves behind, and so public space is no place for us.

Walzer's tone is uncertain and possibly ironic here. He may not believe all this. But there are plenty of people who do believe it. The pity is that their nostalgic vision of the past blinds them to the life that is unfolding abundantly in public spaces all around them right now. If they could only learn to look, they would see private and public life coming together and interfusing in fascinating and creative new ways.

To show briefly what I have in mind, I want to describe a song and an accompanying video that appeared and became a surprise hit in the winter of 1983–84. It is called *Girls Just Want to Have Fun*, featuring the previously unknown Cyndi Lauper, singing her own version of the song:

> Some boys take a beautiful girl
> and hide her away from the rest of the world.
> I want to be the one to walk in the sun.
> And girls just want to have fun.
> Yes, girls just want to have fun.[2]

Lauper is a singer and comedian in the mold of Fanny Brice: a flamboyant "personality" whose extravagant mannerisms often disguise the range and expressiveness of her voice; a brilliant clown who has the dramatic power to suggest underlying depth and sadness without breaking the rhythm of the clowning. *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* is remarkable for the power with which it incarnates a collective dream of what life in public space might be.

This song begins as a story set in a distinctive social space. It is a space that is central in 20th-century popular culture, but (apart from the music of Bruce Springsteen) almost wholly absent from the popular culture of the 1980s: the tenement flat of the urban ethnic working class. In this space, shot in closeup to emphasize its claustral density and suffocating warmth, Lauper appears as a working girl in conflict with her family, fighting to break out of her parents' stifling embrace and simultaneously out of the lower class she and they are in: "Oh, mommy dear, we're not the fortunate ones, / but girls, they want to have fun." She does this by talking on the phone (her parents vainly try to stop this), and by assembling a racially and ethnically integrated group of girls, who proceed to go dancing and singing through the streets of downtown Brooklyn.

As we follow the song and dance, we discover the distinctively public character of the fun that is at issue here. It springs from banter, flirtation, dress, theatrical display, extravagant gestures, stunning moves that are made to be seen. The heroine and her friends are not only starring in their own show, but—for a little while, at least—become their own *auteurs*. But it is only in public that such a show can go on. The protagonists must interact with strangers; some will rise to play along with them, or opposite them, while others crystallize into their audience. They must learn to depend on these reactions to give their actions a shared meaning, to incorporate them into public time.

As the girls dance through Brooklyn's streets, they find themselves suddenly thrust into a gauntlet of construction workers. This is probably one of the primal scenes that the girls' parents feared. But to our surprise and delight, the workers only smile genially and, even more surprising, some of them actually throw down their tools and join the dance. The parade descends into the underground, then emerges from the IRT in the neighborhood of Wall Street. Here they attract fellow travelers of a higher class, both aged stuffed shirts and yuppies. It appears that *everybody* can be accepted by this group and integrated into its dance. And now the video, which began as kitchen-sink naturalism, metamorphoses into magic realism. These girls are not only transforming their lives, but transforming the life of the street itself, using its structural openness to

[2] *Girls Just Want to Have Fun*, music and lyrics by Robert Hazard; copyright © 1979 by Heroic Music. Lyrics revised here by Cyndi Lauper.

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break down barriers of race and class and age and sex, to bring radically different kinds of people together.

At the climax of the story, the heroine returns, along with her newly constituted popular front, to the tenement and the family that tried in vain to fence her in. She brings the street into the house, the public realm into her private space. Her parents find it horrifying, yet alluring: they are tempted to join their child, go public, and change their own drab lives.

Popular culture is worth paying attention to because of its power to dramatize collective dreams. The dream that gets acted out in *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* is a dream of bringing together our private and public lives, of uniting the rights of man and the rights of a citizen. By fulfilling the first commandment of liberal individualism—Express Yourself, Have Fun—we can create a beloved community, a community so radiant that even our parents will want to join. Karl Marx would have recognized this utopian vision: he placed it at the visionary climax of the *Communist Manifesto*, a society in which "the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all."[3]

LET ME TRY to approach this point from another direction. I have recently come back from Spain, where I spent several lovely afternoons in one of the world's most magnificent public spaces, Madrid's Plaza Mayor. This enormous late-Renaissance square can easily hold a couple of hundred thousand people, yet it feels comfortably contained. It is surrounded on all four sides by colonnaded arcades, and the arcades hold multitudes of shops; above the arcades a towered megastructure extends all the way around, containing a large assortment of municipal and national government offices. The visitor today sees the Plaza Mayor as a marvelously rich human mix, full of government workers, petitioners, buyers and sellers of everything legal and illegal, religious pilgrims, foreign tourists, street musicians, political agitators, performing artists, and ordinary people of Madrid seizing time out to see and be seen in the sun. It is impossible for an American not to be smitten with envy here. This plaza looks and feels like the Platonic idea of all that an open-minded public space should be. Why can't we have spaces like this at home?

The Plaza Mayor *is* all that it appears to be. But it is also a lot more. In its splendid openness, it has become something radically different from what it was meant to be. This square, built between 1590 and 1619, was designed as an arena for public spectacles that would dramatize the power and glory of an inquisitorial church and an absolutist state. The plaza's visual focus was a grand balcony from which the king and queen, along with the princes of the church, could look down. What this place was made for, above all, was the *auto-da-fé*, a ceremony for torturing and killing people, and terrorizing the populace, with all the splendor that the Spanish baroque imagination could mobilize.

One special feature of these *autos* sheds some light on our theme of private faces in public places. Among the hundreds of victims condemned in the Plaza Mayor from the early 17th through the middle 18th centuries, the most prominent and notorious seem to have been Marranos: descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had been forcibly converted after 1492, and who professed orthodox Catholic beliefs but secretly kept up fragments of Jewish law and lore, worship and community. For more than two centuries, the Spanish church and state worked together obsessively to detect and destroy them.

Autos-da-fé were meant to show how effective the Inquisition could be in tearing these peoples' masks away, stripping them naked, exposing their most secret selves, so as to annihilate private and public selves together. The Marranos who were present at those ceremonies (to stay away would have been to court instant suspicion) were forced to witness people being publicly destroyed for being what they privately knew themselves to be. In this cli-

[3] Marx would also have admired Lauper's sense of social reality. Her rendition of the Declaration of Rights at the song's end is prefaced (and modified) by a repeated refrain: "When the working, when the working, when the working day is done. . . ." Conscious of her class, she knows that the golden coach will turn into a subway train at dawn, and that, whatever magic happens on the street at night, she is going to have to go back to work in the morning. Still, even during the working day—perhaps especially then—she is determined to dream.

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mate of terror, reticence and insincerity had to be absolute, role-playing a desperate imperative. Even one slip, a slight trace of one's face beneath the facade, could mean a horrible death.

This grisly scenario may be a useful antidote to the nostalgia that often overcomes Americans in the great spaces of the Old World. It can remind us that public space has a dark and checkered past. These dreadful memories should help us to see how the most expansive public space can contract into a dungeon cell, and the most vibrant public life into a trial by ordeal, where people are not free to show themselves as they are. We should be able to see, too, how the liberal individualism that Walzer condemns is essential to the open-minded public space he loves. It is only when people are enjoying the rights of man that they are free to walk in the sun.

The people of Madrid are walking freely in the plaza's sun today. The breakthrough into the sunlight wasn't so long ago. Millions of Spaniards were forced to live like Marranos for 40 years, all through the Franco regime. It was only at the very end of the regime that the city's planners were allowed to ban vehicles from the Plaza Mayor and let people take over. After eight years of liberal democracy, the plaza today is full of people who would have been arrested yesterday: women in T-shirts and miniskirts, children climbing all over the equestrian statue of Philip II, adolescents playing cassettes and dancing to rock and roll, young couples (including some homosexual couples) necking torridly, graffitists writing irreverent proclamations on arcade walls, agitators handing leaflets out (NO CHURCH NO STATE NO TRIBUNAL NO MISSILES NO THANKS), and God only knows how many more. Some of the people here are consciously engaging in politics (there was a huge anti-Reagan demonstration here in May, in honor of our president's state visit); others are just out to have fun. The people of Madrid love the Plaza Mayor today because it is a place were they can comfortably do both, and where both can blend and intertwine. They know that, in the realm of public space, the personal is political. The grand balcony is still there; but in a democratic Spain its meaning is purely ornamental. The people no longer focus vertically, on rulers above them, but horizontally, on each other. If they look up today, it is only to enjoy the sun.

A Walk on the Wild Side: The Urban Poor

THE MOST CRUCIAL form of openness we will need, if we really mean to have open-minded public space, is openness to the urban underclass. This class of people is as old as urban life itself, and a recurrent heartache to people who care about cities. Cities and metropolitan areas have frequently acted as magnets for many people whom they couldn't—or in any case didn't—assimilate. The people left out become residents of shantytowns, squatters in abandoned buildings, sleepers in the subways or the streets, dealers in illegal and dangerous commodities, victims and perpetrators of violence, potential recruits for mobs, cults, the underworld and, since the Age of Revolution, for radical movements of left and right. Many of them are immigrants and refugees, but others are long-time residents displaced by the city's changes. Anyone who wants to claim a share of public space in a modern city is forced to share it with some of the people of the underclass, and so to think about where he stands in relation to them.

The range of possible responses to this situation was delineated brilliantly a century ago by Baudelaire in a prose poem he wrote in the 1860s, "The Eyes of the Poor." The poem tells the story of a loving couple who are spreading their love along a newly completed Parisian boulevard, and who come to rest in a glittering new outdoor café. Actually, the boulevard is not quite finished: there is still a pile of rubble on the street. Suddenly a family in rags steps out from behind the rubble, and walks directly up to the lovers. (Baudelaire's audience knew that the rubble in the picture was probably all that was left of the family's neighborhood, one of the dozens of ancient, impoverished neighborhoods that Baron Haussmann's gigantic urban renewal projects destroyed.) As the poet presents these people, they are not asking for anything: they are just looking around, enjoying the bright lights. But the lovers are embar-

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rassed by the immense social gulf between them and these ragged people who, thanks to the boulevard, are physically close enough to touch. "I felt a little ashamed of our glasses and decanters," the narrator says, "too big for our thirst." Baudelaire's middle-class protagonists have got to respond, not merely to the ragged people in their midst, but also to what these people make them feel about themselves.

Baudelaire's narrator responds in a way that will come to typify the urban left: he looks into their eyes, tries to express sympathy and empathy, conceives of them and himself as united in a human "family of eyes." His girlfriend responds in a radically different way that can be said to typify the urban right: "These people are unbearable with their big saucer eyes. Can't you call the *maître* to send them away?"

More than a century after Baudelaire's death, urban Americans are still living inside the parameters of his poem. We are faced with a very large underclass, and the people in this class don't want to go away; they, too, want a place in the bright light. And their presence in public space forces us to think not only about their place but about our own.

Walzer believes (as I do) that fear of the underclass is one of the main forces that has led America's urban middle class to flee the open-minded cities they have made, and to settle into (and settle for) a single-minded suburban environment that is less risky but a lot less alive. He also believes that many people who grew up in that closed world have grown sick of it, and are now "ready for the pleasures and willing to pay the costs of urbanity."

I hope he is right. But once again he undermines his long-range aims by getting entangled in the very middle-class anxieties and self-deceptions that he is trying to overcome. Thus he proclaims a dualism of successful versus unsuccessful streets. "A successful street," he said, "is self-policing." Policing is meant to fend off all the elements of "an unsuccessful street," which "by contrast always seems inadequately policed, dangerous, a place to avoid." What are these bad elements? Walzer casts his net very wide, and comes up with "social, sexual, and political deviance: derelicts, criminals, political and religious sectarians, adolescent gangs." Rather than subject themselves to close encounters with these kinds, "ordinary men and women flee as soon as they can into private and controlled worlds."

Now, as an account of the way many people feel, this is undoubtedly accurate. The modern world is full of people who are terrified of other people, socially, sexually, or politically different from themselves. But Walzer seems to take their terrors at face value, to understand them as plain facts, or alternately as eternal laws of social physics, rather than as the historically relative and socially conditioned ideologies that they are.

Thus, when we encounter categories like success/failure or normal/deviant, we need to ask: By what criteria? By whose criteria? For what purposes? In whose interests? When we hear about successful public spaces, we should ask: Successful for what? Who benefits from a police definition of success, that is, success as absence of trouble? (By this definition, most of the great public spaces in history—Greek agoras, Italian piazzas, Parisian boulevards—would rate as failures, because all were turbulent places, and needed large police forces on hand to keep the seething forces from exploding. On the other hand, some of the world's most sterile shopping malls would rate as shining successes.) Walzer himself explains who benefits from this: the upscale merchants and real estate promoters who want public space to be nothing but an unending golden shower of big spenders. But these people and their interests are, as Walzer shows, the greatest menace to free public space today; optimal success for them would mean total destruction of public life for all of us. When Walzer accepts their image of successful space, he loses hold on his own critical perspective and his deepest beliefs.

Walzer gets caught up in his enemies' values once more when he adopts the dualism of "ordinary men and women" versus "deviants." Why should he accept an ideology that stigmatizes difference as "deviance," and that considers it normal to flee from anybody different from ourselves? After all, any idea of normality is a *norm*, and as such necessitates a choice of values. Why doesn't Walzer insist on standards of success and normality that square with his own values? Then he could see that the real failures in public space are not the streets full

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of social, sexual, and political deviants, but rather the streets with no deviants at all. And he could fight for a truly open-minded idea of normality: the capacity to interact with people radically different from ourselves, to learn from them, to assimilate what they have to give, maybe even to change our lives, to grow, without ceasing to be our selves.

Walzer concedes grudgingly that his various "deviant" groups "belong, no doubt, to the urban mix." But he warns that they had better not get "too prominent within it." In other words, the people of the underclass (along with all the other deviants) can be tolerated, so long as they keep their place on the outer fringes of public space. I would argue, on the contrary, that there isn't much point in having public space, unless these problematical people are free to come to the very center of the scene. The reason for this is not that they are so lovely to look at (though some of them are, just like some of us). The reason is that they are *there*, part of the same city and the same society as ourselves, linked with us in a thousand ways that would take a lifetime to fully understand. The glory of modern public space is that it can pull together all the different sorts of people who are there. It can both compel and empower all these people to *see* each other, not through a glass darkly but face to face.

One reason I get so persistent about the urban underclass is that I have spent my last 15 years working with students who come from that class, who have grown up looking at the life of the city through the eyes of the poor. On lucky days they were allowed to look, so long as they didn't try to touch. On unlucky days—and any young black or Latin person, along with most poor whites, will have experienced plenty of these—they encountered middle-class or upper-class people who perceived them as assailants, saw their eyes as drawn weapons and, like the woman in Baudelaire's poem, called guards to get rid of them fast. What they have had to face, in Northern cities' public space, has been not so much overt racism—though, God knows, they have felt plenty of it—as a free-floating hysterical fear. They have found themselves in the bizarre position of having to convince a multitude of strangers that they have no criminal designs on them. If they fail in this attempt—especially in encounters with police (often off-duty or in plainclothes) or, recently, with such free-lance vigilantes as Bernhard Goetz—they may well get killed.

Most of the young people I know have developed a repertory of dress and body language that manages to convince their social superiors of their innocence, and so enables them to move through the city in relative safety. On the other hand, it's hard to see how they can possibly—to return to one of Walzer's central ideas—be *urbane* in our urban space, if they are perpetually on trial in it.[4] Their lot is depressingly similar to that of the Marranos in the Plaza Mayor 300 years ago: now, as then, only eternal vigilance can keep the subject alive, and any slip at any moment might be his last; even in the middle of the most spacious square, he is up against the wall.

A more contemporary kindred spirit would be Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. It would be no surprise if many of these young people should come to feel, like Ellison's hero, that it would make more sense to stay indoors or in a hole underground.

I hope they don't stay away. If they do, it will diminish not only their lives—which already are constricted enough—but our own. In fact, poor people have taught us so much of what we know about being fully alive in public: about how to move rhythmically and melodically down a street; about how to use color and ornamentation to say new things about ourselves, and to make new connections with the world; about how to bring out the rhetorical and theatrical powers of the English language in our everyday talk.

Middle-class people often have no idea how much they have learned from underclasses, because they have picked it up at second- or third-hand. But our serious musicians and composers, our dancers and choreographers, our

[4] Sometimes the trial, judgment, sentence, and execution are all over before the defendant even knows what hit him. In September 1983, Michael Stewart, a young black man, was arrested for peaceably writing graffiti in the Union Square subway station. A few minutes later, a whole crowd of white policemen beat, stomped, and strangled him into a coma, then delivered him to Bellevue to die. (In November 1985 an all-white jury found six of those policemen innocent on all counts.)

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designers and painters and poets can tell us, if we ask, how much inspiration they have drawn from our underclasses' overflowing life. And they have come into contact with this life, for the most part, not by making expeditions into dark ghettos (though a few adventurous spirits have done this), but simply by paying attention to the rich sounds and rhythms and images and gestures that poor men and women and boys and girls pour out on the sidewalks and in the subways of New York, and in all the rest of urban America's shared and integrated public space.

Our underclasses are mostly black and Latin today, and the rappers, graffitists, break dancers, B–boys, et al., who have done so much to animate contemporary culture, are drawn mainly from black and Latin youth. But imaginative middle-class WASPs at the turn of the century—like William Dean Howells, Hutchins Hapgood, Jane Addams—could learn similar lessons from Irish, Italians, Slavs, and Jews. All those underclassed people, crammed together in tenements, exploited at work, oppressed in all social relationships, still overflowed with life in their teeming and violent streets, because the public space of the streets was the only place where they could come to life at all. Out in the streets, they could walk in the sun—even in streets where the sun didn't shine. One thing that has made American culture so creative in the 20th century is that it has had the capacity to nourish itself on the life and energy that our underclasses have had to give. It would be an ominous sign for our future if we were to lose that capacity now.

The Narrow Open Spaces

LATE IN THE 1960s, a number of promoters and developers, the Rouse Corporation most prominent among them, recognized that the overwhelming suburbanization of American society was bound to generate a powerful undertow of mass nostalgia for city life. They understood that this emotion could be spectacularly profitable. The fruits of their insight have been a whole new generation of public spaces, lavishly funded (through various complex public-private mixes) and often beautifully designed, throughout America's cities. Houston's Galleria, San Francisco's Ghiradelli Square, Boston's Quincy Market, New York's South Street Seaport are only a few, and more are emerging all the time. (There have been similar movements in Europe, most strikingly in London's recycled Covent Garden.) These developments have preserved parts of our 19th-century cities that would otherwise surely have been destroyed, and they have interwoven modern with traditional architecture in ingenious and occasionally inspired ways. They have come to constitute the reigning model for the public spaces of the future.

Americans who care about city life should be grateful for these spaces, especially since they supplanted a model of urban development that had no appreciation of public space at all. But it is hard to spend any length of time in them without feeling that something is missing. In fact, this something is the underclass, along with all our other "social, sexual, and political deviants." The human mix in these spaces is overwhelmingly white, affluent, and clean-cut. It isn't just that hardly anybody black, Latin, or poor is here; there isn't even anybody scruffy or ragged-looking around.

These plazas are a lot less racially and socially integrated than the busy streets around them. Although their designs are meant to suggest microcosms of the cities they are part of, what they really are is urban-theme parks, Disney Worlds-by-the-sea; except for the skyscrapers that form their backdrop, they could almost be in the middle of the Everglades. There isn't much menace in the air, but neither is there much flash or flair; not much to embarrass people or make them want to run, but even less to hold their attention and make them think. These plazas are too diverse to be single-minded, yet far too shallow to open up the depths in anybody's mind. It would be too strong an accusation, too suggestive of conscious intent, to call them closed-minded. Maybe the word should be *absent*-minded, in memory of all that is out of sight and out of mind.

There are many ironies in this situation. The heyday of public space in recent American history was the 1960s. All over the country, in those years, streets came to life. And not just streets, but public spaces of every kind—

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squares, parks, malls, terminals, even highways—all filled up with people who were gathering, agitating, arguing, proclaiming, marching, stopping traffic, dancing, singing, waving flags, taking off their clothes or putting on strange new clothes, expressing themselves and making reasonable and outrageous demands on everyone else in flamboyantly theatrical but intensely serious ways; sometimes even burning things down, or getting themselves killed. Our streets were never so vibrant, so colorful, so sexy—but at the same time, and for some of the same reasons, they were never so violent or scary. By and by, more and more people began to fall prey to the pressures, including many people who had worked for years to lift those pressures. And our years of urban self-assertion and rebellion were followed by an era of wholesale deurbanization, demographic flight beyond the suburbs to remote rural areas (which of course became suburbs overnight), and great cities on the ropes.

The masses of people who moved far away from their cities may well have found the comfort and security they sought. But many of them seem to have felt a sense of emptiness amid the flowers and the freeways, and yearned for a world they had lost. These urban refugees and their children have been among the main markets courted by the entrepreneurs of the new public space. But although many of these new spaces are pretty places, suburbanites who come in search of something missing in their lives won't find it here. This is because what they really miss is not urban forms in themselves, noble as many of these forms are, but rather a thickness and intensity of human feelings, a clash and interfusion of needs and desires and ideas. For it is this clashing and fusing of human energies—as Baudelaire said it, "their luminous explosion in space"—that fills a city's forms with life.

Growing Up in Public

LET ME NOW PULL TOGETHER many of the strands of this argument by sketching briefly what my own vision of an open-minded space would be. It would be open, above all, to encounters between people of different classes, races, ages, religions, ideologies, cultures, and stances toward life. It would be planned to attract all these different populations, to enable them to look each other in the face, to listen, maybe to talk. It would have to be exciting enough and accessible enough (by both mass transit and car) to attract them all, spacious enough to contain them all (so they wouldn't be forced to fight each other for breathing space), with plenty of exit routes (in case encounters get too strained), and adequate police (in case there's trouble) kept well in the background (so they don't themselves become a source of trouble).

One way to develop this kind of mix will be through shopping facilities: for instance, getting another Alexander's and a Bloomingdale's to locate next-door to each other. In order to maintain the mix, it will be essential to have some form of commercial rent control. Otherwise our space will be destroyed by its very success: its attractiveness will drive rents up beyond the means of all but the classiest and most exclusive stores, and gentrification will transform a resource for the public into a reservation for the rich, as has happened in London and Paris, and is happening now in New York.

Our open-minded space must be especially open to politics. We will want to design spaces within the larger space for unlimited speechmaking and assembling. (New York's Union Square used to have this sort of subspace.) But we will want our public space to be sufficiently differentiated that people who don't want to listen or join in will also have places to go. We will try to design acoustic enclaves, such as already exist in some places (for instance, Washington Square Park), which enable many kinds of discourse—speech, music, song—to go on simultaneously, without drowning each other out.

No doubt there would be all sorts of dissonance and conflict and trouble in this space, but that would be exactly what we'd be after. In a genuinely open space, all of a city's loose ends can hang out, all of a society's inner contradictions can express and unfold themselves. Just as, within the protected space of a psychoanalytic session, an individual can open himself to everything he has repressed—so, maybe, in a protective enclave of public space,

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a whole society might begin to confront its collective repressions to call up the specters that haunt it and look them in the face.

I worry as I write this. Is this the way to sell public space to tired businessmen and harried civil servants? My estimate of "the costs of urbanity" seems to be running a lot higher than Walzer's; some of the people out there will surely conclude that the expense of spirit is too much, say thanks but no thanks, and stay home with their VCRs. Others will note darkly the echoes of the 1960s in my thinking, and argue that they have already gone through the '60s, and once was enough. I agree: I loved the '60s, but by the parade's end it was enough for me. I doubt that anybody could sustain the decade's implosive and explosive pressures—its insatiable demands for self-scrutiny and, simultaneously, for self-transformation, individual and collective, personal and political—for more than a little while. On the other hand, when an individual or a society totally represses its '60s, as Reagan's America has managed to a remarkable extent, it becomes not just politically torpid but spiritually dead. Open-minded public space can be a place where we can remember and recreate the storms and dreams of the '60s, and so bring ourselves a nourishment that, at all times, but especially now, we badly need.

I want to end this essay with Franz Kafka's help. All along, I know, I have been trying to convince people to seek out suffering, conflict, trouble. Some readers will probably find this perverse, and wonder why they should bring more trouble on themselves. Kafka can suggest a reason why: "You can hold back from the suffering of this world," he writes, "you have free permission to do so, and it is in accord with your nature, but perhaps this very holding back is the one suffering you could have avoided." Open public space is a place where people can actively engage the suffering of this world together, and, as they do it, transform themselves into a public. □

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3. Michael Rustin

The Fall and Rise of Public Space

A Postcapitalist Prospect

Michael Walzer's "Notes on Public Space" is a valuable reopening of a debate that in the past has been very important to radical thought. I will here suggest that qualitative and aesthetic issues like this one may have an exemplary relevance for politics in late-capitalist societies, and may help us to revitalize the agenda of the left.

I want to situate our understanding of space and its uses in a longer historical perspective, and to examine the antagonism that has long existed between capitalism and the whole idea of public or, as I prefer to say, *social* space. I shall argue, first, that our most influential conceptions of social space, still preserved in buildings and city plans, are precapitalist in origin; second, that the partial failure of the "modern movement" and of the radical utopian ideas associated with it is due to the extent to which socialist alternatives to the 19th-century industrial city were unavoidably conceived of as compromises with or ameliorations of capitalism, and not as an alternative to it; and third, that the spatial forms of late- or perhaps postcapitalism show a more promising evolution than Walzer suggests. Perhaps this difference in perspective derives from my own primary location in England, and more broadly in Europe, where precapitalist architectural and spatial forms have retained a more pervasive role.

From Public to Private Space

Capitalist development depended upon an ideology of individualism. This was articulated in a theory of economic man, in which individuals served the common good merely by the pursuit of their own interests. It found expression in the Protestant conception of the unmediated relation between the individual believer and God. It produced a culture of privacy, of interior personal space and, in one limited social extension of an otherwise individualistic conception, of familial domesticity. Against this expanded definition of private interest, the concept of the public sphere diminished into the idea of a merely lawful polity regulating the interactions of possessive individuals. Where "public space" formerly had been a social space, belonging to collectivities of various kinds and representing in physical terms distinctive values and identities, it became reduced under capitalism to a nonspace, a mere thoroughfare through which individuals moved in pursuit of their private purposes.

There is the risk in Walzer's concept of "open-mindedness" of a celebration of the impersonal stripped-down quality of the public space of individualism, where nothing is held or known in common and where, therefore, there is little scope for interaction or meaning. The chaos of sensations, described in Georg Simmel's essay *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, to which the "blasé attitude" of indifference (coolness, we now say) is the city-dweller's self-protective response, erodes the sense of being in a social relationship to others. It is this destruction of the quality of "public space" in the capitalist city, and its chronic overcrowding, squalor, and pollution that gave rise to the antiurbanism of many modern planners. Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* described this evolving reaction to the modern city in literature. Dickens's achievement stands out as a last brilliant attempt to display all the comings and goings of the modern city in terms of intelligible social meanings.

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In practice, the everyday experience of many capitalist cities is given a more dense and meaningful social texture than this, in at least two ways. One is through the more benign operations of the market, which is after all supposed to encourage diversity. The specialization of shops, cafés, places of entertainment, and distinctive "quarters" is a consequence of the private development of urban space, available to those who can pay for it, and to a lesser extent to the window-gazers who enjoy by watching. Jane Jacobs's *Death and Life of Great American Cities* is essentially a polemic on behalf of the artisanal and petty-capitalist users of city space, against the power of big corporations and government planners who imposed monolithic, one-dimensional patterns of land use on the city. It is important to note that many of the better, recent developments in the life of British and American cities—the renewal of old market, warehouse, and other varied-use areas, for example—have only been possible because of the significant role given to small traders and entrepreneurs. We should remember that much of the life of modern cities depends on the vitality of this sector of small trading.

It is most unlikely that such a diversity of services could ever be provided by municipal or state trading companies, however enlightened. The internal facilities of London's South Bank arts complex, for example, do not compensate for its windy open spaces and lack of cafés and shops outside. If we like cities, market exchange has its indispensable place in them, and to this extent Jacobs's (over)reaction to planning has had a good influence. Many of the best settings for market exchange, however, have required governmental action to make the space available.

Most cities have some authentically "public" space—more than the areas in-between private uses of various kinds. Parks, gateways, embankments, town squares, streets designed for ceremonial purposes rather than merely for transit, cathedrals and other religious buildings, market halls, museums, monuments, art centers have this "public" character. Such spaces are usually the most strongly emphasized in every city (in their scale, vista, and prominence) and provide the most frequented visiting sites for tourists. Together with the buildings that fill them they serve to encode public values of some kind, and to engender feelings of awe, admiration, or merely enjoyment (of a panorama, visual diversity, architectural form). They are more than empty spaces for private activity (though they are this, too).

Architecture provides a crucial framing for such public places and is often one of the main attractions in them. By his emphasis on the variety of human uses of "open-minded public space," rather than on the representation of public meanings in architectural form, Walzer leaves out an important dimension of such places. People's identity and sense of the world is expressed and reflected in the buildings they know, just as it is by their language or clothes. Buildings are an important part of the public world.

The Precapitalist Origins of Public Space

It was Lewis Mumford, in *The City in History*, who pointed out that most of the memorable features of the city are precapitalist in their origin. The medieval squares and market buildings in many European towns are the creation of corporate institutions and trading or manufacturing guilds, not of individualist capitalism. Powerful social institutions were the precondition for this generous and elaborately articulated public space. The architecture of churches and monasteries is also the creation of corporate institutions. The enclosed university, in its characteristic English forms and in its later development into the more open campus, is a derivative of monastic ideals and similarly depends on social conceptions of architecture and space. Like other elaborated uses of land for expressive purposes, it required some form of corporate or social land ownership, in which maximizing returns is not the only criterion for deciding land use.

The epoch of monarchical absolutism has also had a powerful influence on our conception of modern cities, in its surviving buildings and city plans, and in the transmutation of its types of display and monumentality into more republican and democratic ceremonial forms. Baroque squares, monumental palaces and façades, planned vistas, ceremonial streets have

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been transposed from the absolutist era of prerevolutionary France and imperial Vienna to a later bourgeois period in Europe, and to the monumental republicanism of Washington, D.C. Formal parks, originally developed as extensions of palaces and great country houses, became democratized as green spaces of cities. (In London several of them are still called Royal Parks.)

The life of the aristocracy and the absolutist courts was, as Norbert Elias has pointed out in *The Civilizing Process*, characteristically lived in public. The distinction between space and time for work and for leisure was developed by the bourgeoisie, not the aristocracy, since the former lived characteristically by disciplined work and the latter on rents. For the peasantry and the working class, for the most part, the distinction was absent for a different reason, since physical labor until modern times swallowed up nearly all of their time and space. Public time and space, for the lower classes, seems to have been lived in the outdoors, on holidays and festivals. Life in the country house and at court consisted of activities devoted to social display and "conspicuous consumption," the pursuit of games and pastimes initially related to training for war and subsequently merely mimicking it, and to courtship and the pursuit of interfamilial alliances through marriage.

The development of bourgeois culture involved a shift toward private space, in the basic functions of meals (the private dining room instead of the hall), movement (the private coach instead of the equestrian cavalcade), and business (the private office instead of the public supplication). Inferiors, who were often present though disregarded in aristocratic households, became excluded from the everyday life of the bourgeoisie. The celebration of domesticity, with the sexual division of roles that followed from it, is another aspect of the growth of private rather than public space.

Mumford suggests that the aristocratic and courtly ideals of gracious hospitality and physical and mental cultivation became transmuted into the commercial hospitality of grand hotels, where access to a high style of entertainment is available for money instead of by invitation. Public sporting events, such as the hunt, the horse show and the race meeting, evolved from their country-house origins, retaining in each case a pronounced aristocratic flavor. Other kinds of cultivation—the private library, the concert, for example—also became democratized and available either by sale or right of local citizenship. In some instances an intervening form of restricted "public life"—that of the regiment or the "public school" (the British adjective is interesting from this point of view)—is the seedbed for the development of modern forms of public culture, as, for instance, character-building sports and the gentleman's club.

The point of all these institutions is that they embody and derive from an idea of social values, connected with status and its display, or with sacred values held in common by corporate bodies, and not merely from concepts of personal or familial self-cultivation. They are precapitalist in spirit. The buildings in which many of these activities take place are also designed to celebrate corporate values. The dignified character of such "public buildings," following various classical traditions of design, is of a piece with their social character.

The preindustrial village also seems sometimes to have given rise to a sociable form of building and design, around a square, green, or village street. A limited variety of building types and sizes on the basis of a common vernacular style has given rise to many settlements that are both harmonious and diverse. The influence of large landowners and of urban guilds in some small towns or larger villages was also important in imposing this more social or conventional use of space. These unified forms of design, even of quite small buildings where attractiveness lies in the whole ensemble, retain an aura that is out of the ordinary and continue to draw tourists from near and far. It seems that the public enjoyment of buildings today to a great extent depends on the preservation and rehabilitation of the surviving artifacts of a more social and less purely individualistic culture.

There have been periods when the urban bourgeoisie was sufficiently committed to its collective self-assertion as a class, against rival aristocratic or monarchical regimes, to be capable of a similarly unified demarcation of

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public space. The self-assertion of Victorian municipalities, with their public squares and town halls, and the creation of London's residential squares are examples. Another example of the occasionally more social character of bourgeois urban design is the New England town, where a sense of religious and political community (expressed in the central importance of churches and public buildings) gave a unity to urban forms that later capitalist developments in America mostly did not retain.

Specific occupational traditions—for example in marine building, in the design of mills of various kinds during the earlier years of the industrial revolution, or in the architecture of canal- and railway-building—have also developed distinctive styles, perhaps because their long-lasting and more guildlike qualities gave rise to a sense of tradition and appropriate form. The precondition for these identifiable traditions and languages of public building seems to be the existence of coherent social groups that share some common culture and wish to see their social identity reflected in their physical environment. To this idea of social coherence, boundary, and meaning the spirit of capitalism has been generally antithetical.

Working-class communities usually have had less opportunity to give physical or architectural expression to their collective differences with capitalism, for obvious material reasons. But while many of their visible institutions have been political in nature, there is also a domain of popular working-class culture, often developed in interaction with the market economy, which has evolved particular and traditional styles of dress, interior furnishings, entertainments, and their accompanying cultures of physical space. Perhaps an artisan tradition has also been indirectly influential in engineering and industrial design, as individuals from working-class origins have moved into positions where they could shape the productive process. This sketch is drawn mainly from a particular English experience. Perhaps in other societies, with more revolutionary traditions, such as France, the spatial meaning of the major landmarks of the capital city is somewhat more politicized. The point is that we should not discount the attempts of individualism's radical opponents to give an alternative meaning to the physical environment, offering another valuable heritage.

Capitalist Conceptions of Space

I WANT TO SUGGEST THAT CAPITALISM PROMOTES a view of space as an alienable and private commodity. This also leads to a focus on individuals as opposed to corporate communities. Functions that were formerly undertaken in public become individualized and segregated. Michel Foucault has written about the development of the modern asylum, prison, and hospital as the individualization and segregation of formerly social spheres, seeing this as part of capitalist rationalization. We need only compare the semipublic world of the Marshalsea, a debtors' prison, in Dickens's *Little Dorrit* with the modern prison cell block to see what this means. More generally, today's property owners devote their main aesthetic efforts to internal design and to the outward appearance of their own properties, not to shared spaces, and they do so with a view to resale value. No one expected to sell a medieval church or a market hall. Such buildings existed as public resources of the community and as its symbolic representations.

Perhaps the most consistently capitalist urban pattern is the gridiron street plan common in American cities (which, of course, mostly lack a precapitalist history). This plan was designed to allow the parcelization of blocks among separate owners and developers; each piece of land was conceived as a separate entity to be developed independently of every other. The gridiron pattern provided the most minimal public framework of access, transit, and common services, and allowed the market to be the main regulator of land use. It allowed for infinite flexibility and change but also precluded the larger differentiations and scale of design that characterize most memorable cities. The "precinct-planning" that Jacobs attacks has produced squares and vistas as well as bureaucratic monoliths. In contrast to the capitalist pattern of fully alienable land, both precapitalist and later social democratic forms of ownership have sought to exercise greater constraint on what could be built where, with

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varying results. Who owns the land, and who has a say in how it is to be disposed, is the crucial question in regard to urban development and planning.

Walzer's sketch of the process of destruction of open-minded public space relates mostly to the recent development of cities, and we might be inclined to conclude from it that within living memory such welcoming public space was part of the experience of most citizens. But one should recall that most of the factors Walzer cites—communications technologies, the ideology of individualism, the factor of profit, and the forces of social inundation—have been effecting change in urban forms for nearly two centuries. The application of profit-making criteria to building produced the overcrowding and lack of amenities of 19th-century cities. Improvements in transportation led to the cities' expansion, and to the process of suburbanization as it became possible to seek solitude and proximity to the countryside while retaining access to the city for daily work. The processes of "urban succession" took place as individuals of different ethnic and occupational groups sought to improve their location, and new entrants replaced them in disadvantaged areas. To most reformers of the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of this one, the city was *the* social problem, offering neither comfort nor health, nor sufficient private or public space to any but a tiny minority. The view from Greenwich Village or areas like it is a somewhat privileged and special one. One has to think of the environment of the whole metropolis, not merely of its most dynamic and cosmopolitan central quarters, in deciding one's attitude to the city.

A Defense of Urban Planning

WALZER CITES THE ATTITUDES of planners as part of the contemporary problem; they impose a preference for single-use and functionally specialized space over the more mixed and open forms that (sometimes) previously existed. Clearly, there are disastrous urban-renewal schemes that this correctly characterizes. But modernist architectural and planning theory needs to be characterized in a longer historical perspective, so that we can understand the present situation and its possibilities.

The modern movement confronted a contrast between great technological and material potential and the reality of urban squalor. Traditionalist idioms in architecture, through the Beaux Arts movement, were also often deployed in grandiose and pretentious ways to decorate the façades of capitalist society, while doing nothing for its real material problems. The rejection of tradition thus conjoined with more democratic purposes for architecture. The agendas of pressing concerns for architects and planners were understandably related to those of the mass movements and organizations on which progressive hopes were based. These focused on material conditions—what we now describe as social welfare—and also on the possibilities of making commodities then largely confined to the middle class more widely available.

The utilitarian purposes of public housing, and the application of modern techniques of manufacture to household objects, naturally became the central concerns of progressive-minded designers. Functionalism in building and design was an attempt to apply the potential of science and technology to everyday needs, standardized and measured in order to achieve the benefits of large-scale production. Sometimes the resulting styles seemed to speak more of masses than of people. The Bauhaus in the Weimar Republic was the most influential proponent of this new approach, and comparable approaches became part of the aesthetic orthodoxy of social democracy. We can now see these developments as aspects of the amelioration and humanization of capitalism, rather than its transcendence. Houses and apartments are where people live when they are not working; commodities are what they buy in the shops with their income from labor. Both presuppose a capitalist—or planned capitalist—productive system, in the same way as did the other major institutions of the welfare state. This emphasis on the sphere of circulation and distribution is far from what such arts-and-crafts socialists as Morris had in mind when they envisaged socialism above all as the transformation of production and work.

There were problems in making a beautiful and expressive environment out of an over-

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whelming priority for functional housing. Alan Colquohoun has pointed out (in his *Essays in Architectural Criticism*) that houses were often, in ancient cities, merely the areas in between the interesting public buildings, just as private life was the space not taken up by a more important public life. When the designers of public housing after World War II attempted to find a social and public rhetoric for it, they often sacrificed the individuality and diversity that people wanted from their dwellings. On the other hand, if they built separate houses and gardens, they risked a repetitive and uniform scaling-down of more generous prototypes of private space. It was impossible to build on the necessary huge scale and within the severe cost constraints with always admirable aesthetic results. In some public housing projects, such as England's Alton Estate at Roehampton, with a variety of building types and a beautiful parkland site, architectural success was achieved. But it may be easier to represent social purposes in spatial terms where there are social and not merely aggregated individual purposes in question.

In England, a powerful memory of preindustrial rural and small-town culture and a "preindustrial" commitment to the idea of an integrated community produced the distinctive planners' utopia of the garden city, and its later derivatives in the postwar "new and expanded town" schemes. The large-scale development of public housing in Britain also gave rise to a domestication of modern architecture and compromise with vernacular house-and-garden styles, as well as some of the excesses of tower-block development. The garden-city ideal has been patronized by urbanists such as Jane Jacobs: "His [Ebenezer Howard's] aim was the creation of self-sufficient small towns, really very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your life among others with no plans of their own." But in fact the garden city came nearer to a workable conception of an alternative working and living environment than any other utopian scheme of the present day, and was unusual in thinking beyond the idea of the housing project to the scale of a whole community. We should respect the intentions and achievements of this first generation of socialist urban planners, constrained as they unavoidably were by the practical limits of welfare reform.

In the United States, the ideology of town planning had some comparable successes through the progressive movement and later the New Deal. The development of city and country parks, the provision of public access to and the protection of parts of the coastline, a small number of planned urban developments, and the regional planning of the Tennessee Valley Authority are perhaps the most important outcomes in a setting much more dominated than in Europe by business priorities. Modern architecture in the U.S. developed mainly under private auspices, not through the agency of the state or municipality. Capitalism has produced its modernist monument in the Manhattan skyline, appropriately the product of an aggregation of many separate corporate decisions rather than of a coordinated plan. But even here we should note that the impulse to "build in style" transcends merely financial motivations, and arises from the desire to establish a corporation's status rather than merely profit. The development of many fine private houses designed by leading architects has been another principal channel of modernism in the United States, appropriately theorized by Frank Lloyd Wright in his anti-urban advocacy of the free-standing individual homestead.

If we assess the pattern of urban development over a relatively long-range period, it seems to me that in Britain anyway recent developments, in the main, have been beneficial. One cannot discount the huge improvements in housing standards brought about by government regulation, public home-building programs, tax subsidies to owner-occupiers, and rising standards of living. The basic census indices of density of occupation (rooms per person) and provision of major amenities (bathrooms, hot water, and so on) show the success of housing policies. Britain enjoys a much higher standard of housing than its per capita income would lead one to expect. It has become fashionable to blame "planners" for the continuing problems of slum estates and unsuitable apartment blocks, while forgetting that it was the consequences of the market that

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made these planned interventions necessary in the first place.

Nor does the absence of such interventions now usually produce good inner-city environments in the U.S. The multiplication of suburban housing tracts and small-town communities is not much to the taste of cosmopolitan urbanists, but as Herbert Gans pointed out in *Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life*, such communities seem well suited to people at certain stages of their lives (notably families with children at home) and meet the aspirations typical of many low- and middle-income families. The evidence is certainly that such communities have been freely chosen.

Nor is this in England merely a process of creeping suburbanization, repeating the earlier growth of London and other large cities. The more radical solution to the problem of a self-defeating leapfrog into a suburbanized countryside has been the development of free-standing towns, derived in part from the garden-city and new-town concepts, but in most cases built around preexisting urban centers. The Green Belt concept has been one means of inducing this change of strategy. This pattern has facilitated the development of houses and workplaces within the same towns (though usually separately zoned), and has reduced the necessity for lengthy commuting journeys. It also makes use of old town centers and their more varied building stock, with all their advantages: a range of rent levels, flexibility of land use, and diversity of atmosphere.

The development of old towns enables some of the benefits of the precapitalist urban environment to be combined with more modern amenities and scale. This has provided some good "open-minded space" (in market squares, town parks, and on riversides, for example), and has met some of the objectives of diversity and density of use. In smaller towns it seems possible to achieve this without the corresponding big-city penumbra of huge surrounding slums, urban blight, and sprawling suburbs, which have been too large a price to pay for a lively downtown.

Kevin Lynch—in his *The Image of the City* and *What Time Is This Place?*—describes the human need for spatial orientation, for a sense of physical location, so that our surroundings mark some relationship with our own past and that of our community. The many deliberate decisions by public and private agencies to preserve and adapt the old structures of Britain's cities and villages seem to reflect such understanding. The lower land values in small-town developments, compared with those in the centers of cities, and the greater fiscal resources of expanding towns, which lack the social burdens of older areas, may have given public authorities a stronger hand in these developments. The growth of tourism, both local and distant, has reflected and amplified this increased use of "old space." These developments seem to increase the availability and quality of public space and also, in many cases, its "open-mindedness."

Some limited steps have been taken in a similar direction within the older industrial areas of many British cities, though these are now overshadowed by high levels of industrial dereliction, unemployment, and poverty. The larger cities' reduced density of population does, however, make it more feasible to develop some of their unused resources—disused docks, canals, old industrial buildings, attractive terrace housing, residential squares—and this has been happening on some scale. An important prerequisite is a greater differentiation of this urban space, in place of the featureless, mixed-use urban and industrial sprawl that still characterizes much of it. But the dominant trend of thinking is now toward identifying strong focuses for development (which can also attract industry, commerce, higher rent levels, and so on) rather than merely indiscriminate rebuilding. The shift away from "comprehensive development" to a philosophy of rehabilitation and piecemeal renewal has been important in improving the urban environment.

Some Virtues of Single-Mindedness

MICHAEL WALZER'S ADVOCACY of "open-mindedness" is appealing—the motorway café and the airport lounge are few people's favorite places. But it also goes somewhat against the grain of one irresistible and even benign 20th-century development—increasing diversity of life-style. As a place to have a grown-up dinner,

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McDonald's leaves something to be desired, but for a children's supper it seems to be seen even by the most sophisticated children as perfection. Bird sanctuaries are fairly specialized sorts of places, at least for their human visitors (perhaps the attraction is the open-minded space accorded to the birds), but their creation, and that of fishing areas, mountain trails, and coastal paths, is surely to be welcomed. The growing specialization of holiday resorts and amenities, with the development of activity holidays, educational holidays (with participants housed in college dormitories), music and poetry festivals, camping sites, archaeological excavations, canal restoration, and so on, enlarge the available modes for exploring oneself and one's surroundings. The yachting marina, the local airport from which individuals can fly small planes, or the bowling alley are places for weekend activities that generate particular social communities.

Some people choose to go to seminars or even to political meetings for their main delight, and presumably value the fairly single-minded purposes that they pursue there. We should want public spaces that make all these things possible, but they can't always be all that open-minded, without threatening their purpose. (Nor need they *always* be public.) My argument attaches more importance to the existence of social space than to whether it is open-minded or not, though, to be sure, too much single-mindedness destroys any sense of sociability.

Understanding the possible benefits of differentiation may enable us to develop a more inclusive pluralism, as a response to the pressures of "inundation" that Walzer describes. But a pluralist culture will have to provide access to basic goods and opportunities for all, if its competitions and conflicts are to be tolerable. If major groups are excluded from the sphere of common values and goods, then the peace and stability of the whole system will ultimately be threatened. Given a commitment to basic equality of citizenship, and to the strengthening of territorial units that can contain individuals in some meaningful community, other differences of life-style may become less frightening.

The texturing of social space requires collectivities capable of public preference and self-expression. Some precapitalist communities had this capability; so have some modern communities, through their public authorities; so do some private or semiprivate institutions, such as universities and even some enlightened corporations. But the communities, social networks, and cultures that might support a renaissance of social space and its design are hardly in common supply. The vision of what to do with the resources of affluence is still widely lacking.

A sure way of finding the kinds of public spaces from which people gain pleasure is to see where they most like to go. The "atriums" of some new Manhattan skyscrapers (often built partly in response to the pressures of city planners) are places that people seem to find interesting, both in themselves and for the opportunity they provide to be with other people. It is contrary to observation to think that people usually seek to avoid crowds. One attraction of the shopping mall—however functional and one-dimensional its purpose and however excessive the role of shopping in capitalist societies—is that it provides a sense of place, as well as a convenient solution to the problem of parking the car. The places tourists like to go are another index, tourists being ourselves as well as other people.

The Metropolis Isn't Everything

We should expect more of small- and medium-sized towns, and not merely compare them disparagingly with the greater cosmopolitan excitements of Manhattan and similar metropolises. Most people cannot live in Manhattan or its like, or even visit it very often, and the undue adulation of the marvels of such centers is a symptom of an unduly stratified, mercenary, and centralized cultural marketplace. Just as "open-minded space" depends on a shared social identity and the political powers that can give it expression, so a shared cultural space requires communal identities to nurture it. Historically, cities of 100,000 people seem to have sustained rich cultures, whose leading practitioners have been able to interact with people from other cities without losing their sense of local identity. We should favor a

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culture as well as a politics of decentralization, and have some confidence that ordinary-sized towns need not be places where one would only live if one had "no plans of one's own." Otherwise the market, with its speculation in scarce commodities, turns "culture" into a "positional good." By definition, access to it is defined by the exclusion of others.

Perhaps the tropism that draws the best toward the bright lights is the obverse of the flight from social inundation by "failures," which Walzer describes as part of the current pathology of the city. Both arise from a culture of winners and losers. The art market, or the celebrity of stars, or even the high visibility of elite intellectual or academic coteries express versions of capitalist competitiveness that a more egalitarian society would mitigate through a richer particularism and sense of place. What we need are multiple hierarchies, not "single-minded" ones, and these can only be sustained by local and regional diversity. The towns of 50,000 to 500,000 citizens—not the isolated homestead or the village or the metropolis—seem the most promising building blocks for this.

Some Hopeful Prospects

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS in the use of public space in Britain suggest the continuing vitality of social values and the power of a precapitalist heritage to shape contemporary self-definitions. These developments also indicate a new determination to limit the damage the car can do to our way of life, while not neglecting its convenience. The migration to modest-sized towns, closer to the countryside, often with lively schools and other public amenities (the communal sports center has been a thriving area of new municipal enterprise in Britain) may be the reflection of a widespread popular wish to live in a knowable community—a less materialist vision than the reigning ideology of mass consumption and competition might suggest.

Rather than politics leading to an improvement in our public space, it may be that improvement in our public space itself points the way to a possible improvement in our politics. The pedestrianized town square, the thriving street market, and the cleaned-up river with its fishing people, which all result partly from public decision, may show us that a sense of community is already here, if we know how to recognize and speak to it. The renewal of municipal socialism in Britain may mean that this now has some political reflection. While one cannot hold out much hope for trade unionism in more dispersed workplaces, one can see the basis for a community politics, in which full employment, good social services, and the use of the community's resources for social as well as private purposes would be objectives held in common.

This relatively hopeful perspective on public space and its political significance is based chiefly on English experience, and one can well see that the view from New Jersey might currently appear more as Michael Walzer describes it. In the U.S.A. there is less of a precapitalist heritage. And there is an apparent infinity of space and resources. The car now seems to be winning its battle to destroy the city as a form of life. Yet the sense of community and locality has resonance here, too, and the attempts that are being made to restore old city centers will be emulated elsewhere. Certainly it seems reasonable to suggest, as Walzer does, that members of an affluent society will sooner or later ask themselves, How can we do something for *our* place, instead of for *my* place? But for this to happen, we need a richer discussion of places and their possibilities. □

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Gus Tyler

Labor's "Vatican II"

In Search of New Goals, New Methods

Without fanfare, in the recession summer of 1982, the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO appointed a special committee to "review and evaluate changes that are taking place in America in the labor force, occupations, industries, and technology." Who would have suspected that this posse, with the academic-sounding name of the Committee on the Evolution of Work, would be the beginning of American labor's Vatican II? But it was, and the potential impact on U.S. unionism is as profound as that of Vatican II on the Catholic Church.

It took two and a half years for the public—and for the unions—to find out where this committee was headed. It may take several more years to judge how valuable the initiative of the committee really was. But of this there can be no doubt: American unions are desperately in search of new goals and new methods.

Troubled Times

AUGUST 1982: The economy was in bad shape: the jobless rate was double-digit, real wages for workers were falling, the land was strewn with bankruptcies. The political atmosphere—for unions—was hostile: the first union president ever to become president of the United States was making a religion of his apostasy by appointing people to the Labor Department, the National Labor Relations Board, and the federal courts, who would reverse the labor-management trends of half a century. The unions were in retreat. Numerically they had fallen from representing 45 percent of the eligibles in 1954 to about 30 percent in 1982. Givebacks were the order of the day. Organizing efforts were increasingly fruitless. The public image of unions was unflattering. In these disquieting days, labor turned to reflection, establishing a committee to do what ceremonial committees usually do not do—to think painfully.

Nineteen eighty-two was, of course, not the first time that the American labor movement found itself on the decline. There were several such previous moments. And even a cursory look at past times of adversity would reveal a pattern, the circumstances when unions traditionally have lost ground:

1. When the business cycle turns down, labor is weakened. Unorganized workers fear joining a union when unemployment is widespread; unions hesitate to press their demands when firms are infirm; hungry scabs walk through picket lines. Bad times for business have historically been bad times for unions. Graphs of the economy and of union power are almost parallel lines. In the slow growth years of the 1970s and in the real recession years of the early 1980s, unions could expect to suffer.

2. Unions find life difficult when a national administration is hostile. Increasingly, the National Labor Relations Act, under the malevolent administration and retrogressive reinterpretation of board and courts, has become—in the eyes of labor—a National Anti-Labor Act. From his "bully pulpit" an unfriendly president can poison the atmosphere for unions in the same way that Franklin Roosevelt breathed new life into organized labor.

3. Unions are in trouble when the national economic mix changes, as unionized sectors wane and as unorganized sectors wax. The most dramatic such change has been the shift

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from a predominantly goods-producing economy (where unions were strong) to a predominantly service economy (where unions traditionally were weak). By the early 1980s, workers in the service economy made up 70 percent of the work force.

4. Unions are likewise shaken when economic centers move from one part of the country (with a union heritage) to another part (without such a tradition). A textbook example is the shift from the Snowbelt to the Sunbelt.

5. Finally, unions are discomfited by any heavy influx of immigrants. The newcomers are fearful; they have lower expectations; they are pleased to have any job; they are viewed with suspicion if not distaste, and they view others with diffidence and distrust; they are outside the mainstream.

In the 1980s, American unions were hit simultaneously by five damaging conditions: recession, governmental animus, the shifts from North to South and from goods to services, the influx of about a million newcomers (legal and illegal) per year. A second reading of history might have eased labor's anxieties, for each of these traditional causes of union enervation seemed to contain a self-correcting potential, the seeds of its own resurrection. If unions go down when the "cycle" goes down, then unions will go up when the "cycle" turns up. So the thing to do is to wait for "recovery," or better, to work for national policies to stimulate recovery. If an administration is hostile, the thing to do is get out the vote, to reward friends and punish enemies. If the economy moves from goods to services, the unions merely have to move—as they have done quite impressively—from goods to services. If jobs go South, the unions go South. If new breeds of immigrants enter the labor force, give them time (and some help) and they will ultimately organize—as did the Irish, Jews, Italians, blacks, Hispanics. History's prescription for the traditional infirmities is to apply the tincture of time—with patience, persistence, and prayer.

Turning to this well-established household remedy would have been the natural thing to do. Instead the AFL-CIO chose the hard path, really two paths—one leading outward and the other inward—and with reason.

Changing Problems

THE 1980s ARE NOT THE 1930s. Solutions that were valid fifty years ago are not valid—or equally valid—today, because, in no small measure, the problems have changed. The differences that have developed over a half century are not quantitative alone, they are qualitative; they are not incremental, they are gross. On a global scale, there are changes under way that are profound, puzzling, and—in some cases at the moment—imponderable. Within the unions, changes are also under way—sly, subtle, unintentional, and insinuating changes—that are making unions much different from what they set out to be or what they presently believe themselves to be.

The 1980s are not the 1930s in at least three crucial ways. First, the robot is here; second, the economy is global; third, the labor force is elusive. Put otherwise, the economy has undergone profound changes technologically, geographically, and spiritually. For unions, this means that their potential membership will be dispossessed by electronic gadgets, that governments will be less effective instruments for taming corporate power, and that those who are the working force will be more difficult to compose into an effective social force. The old premises of unionism—people with jobs, governments with power to regulate their domestic economies, and individuals with definable "careers"—will be shaken, if not shattered.

The essence of the committee's first report in August 1983, entitled "The Future of Work," was the newly developing role of the robot—although it was not stated that way. The opening sentence stated plainly: "Massive changes in the structure of the U.S. economy are under way." The key word to remember is "structure."

Unemployment in the future will be increasingly *structural*, not arising simply from an imbalance between production and consumption but from the displacement of persons by robots. "Technology is displacing workers and overturning traditional work patterns," says the report. "Industries and occupations are changing." By "technology" is meant:

> the new microtechnology with its information communications potential [that] is bringing

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change which is perhaps more revolutionary than the industrial revolution brought by the steam engine in the nineteenth century and the transportation revolution brought by the internal combustion engine earlier in the twentieth century.

Labor's fear is real despite its experience with automation that, contrary to many expectations, did not cause massive unemployment during the 1950s and 1960s. The reason for the fear is that the robot and the automaton may be kin but they are not the same. Automation provided muscle but not brain; it could handle big lots but not small ones; it worked well for some standardized operations on farms and in factories but was not particularly adept in stores, offices, banks, information processing, or designing. Because workers displaced by automation from farm and factory could find employment in the service sector, the percentage of unemployment in the total society did not rise.

But when the "chip" invades the service sector, then where shall the displaced go? "Robots in the factory, word processors in the office, scanners at the checkout counter, push-button banking, computers in the home, satellites in the sky," the report notes, "remind the nation of the pervasive impact of advancing technology."

Even public employment—about one-third of the service sector—is not likely to rush to the rescue. Budget-badgered governments at all levels are more likely to fire than to hire more employees.

A "Labor Surplus Society"

LABOR FEARS WHAT THE REPORT calls a "labor surplus society," a fear that seems to be confirmed by trends in unemployment since 1969. Since then, every "recovery" has been less of a recovery. When Lyndon Johnson left office (1969) the unemployment rate was 3.4 percent. After two years of Nixon, the jobless rate had risen to 5.8. By 1973, after the application of a few stimulants, the jobless rate was cut back—not to the original 3.4, but to 4.8 (unemployment was rising in good times). By 1975, we were in deep recession with a jobless rate of 8.3. In the following "recovery" (1979) the jobless rate was not back to the original 3.4 or even the subsequent 4.8 but stood at 5.8. By 1983, we were in recession again with a jobless rate of 9.5. In the recovery of 1984–85, unemployment fell to 7.2. In sum, because the hard-core unemployment rate has been rising steadily for a decade and a half, what would have been called a deep recession (almost a depression) in the early 1970s is now called "recovery."

In the ingenious ways of some more imaginative economists, this frightening trend, an ever larger portion of the population without jobs, has been rationalized into a virtue—or at least a necessary evil. The rationale goes by the name of NAIRU, an acronym for Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment. This bit of arcanity, stated simply, decrees that there must be a certain level of unemployment to ward off inflation. This allegedly necessary *level* has been rising since 1970. Back then, it was about 4 percent; now (1985) it is about 7 percent.

Since a certain level of unemployment is deemed necessary for the proper functioning of our society, economists no longer speak of a "full employment" society since, by definition, it will induce the inflationary evil; instead they substitute the phrase "high employment" society—a change that implies a required level of unemployment. Thus when Washington economists speak of a "structural deficit," they mean a budget deficit in a "high employment economy," which—at the time of this writing—is about 7 percent unemployment, a level that costs the federal treasury about $245 billion a year in lost income and associated expenditures. In a truly full employment economy there would be a surplus.

Although NAIRU is one of those *givens* among policymakers, no economist has even tried to show why NAIRU has risen from 4 percent to 7 percent. Nor can any economist explain why inflation will inevitably follow if the unemployment rate falls to 2 percent, or 1 percent, or zero. If it is permissible to view much of economics as pure apologia, then it would not be beyond concluding that what some economists do is watch the graphs, note the unemployment rate when the media announce "recovery," and then ordain that the

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jobless rate at that happy moment is irreducible.

NAIRU is the ritualized apologia for a society that may soon announce that its economy is in a state of "recovery" although the unemployment rate is double-digit. And, in doing so, these apologists will be confirming the conclusion of the committee that we are living in a "labor surplus society," that—may I add—is becoming ever more so, not only in the U.S. but in the world.

Confronted with this frightening fact, the committee lists its traditional program to cope with unemployment, with proposals ranging from enforcement of the Humphrey-Hawkins Act to a "rational industrial policy." Part of that program calls for a "realistic trade policy," a euphemism for another euphemism called "fair trade," as distinguished from "free trade."

This plank is but one-half a point in an eleven-point program, but it may be expected that in the coming years labor—and the nation—will have to give more and more attention to the *international* aspects of our economy. The traditional Keynesian formulas will no longer work in a world where domestic economies are inescapably affected by and dependent on global factors. Like it or not, the modern economy is international. And unless that bothersome fact is recognized, no program to cope with domestic economies is "realistic."

A Global Setting

CONSIDER WHAT HAPPENS to the simple Keynesian device to stimulate the economy through government expenditures when applied in the current global setting. In the 1930s, government expenditures for New Deal reconstruction projects went to American residents who, in turn, spent the money to buy things and services from American residents who, in turn, did the same thing. The impact of each dollar spent by Uncle Sam was multiplied as the dollar moved through the system.

In 1984, the federal government ran a deficit of some $200 billion—a spur that should have driven the economy forward at a breakneck pace. What happened? In the first quarter, the stimulant worked as the economy leaped forward at the brisk pace of 10.4 percent. But, in the second quarter, the pace slowed to 8.5; in the third quarter to 1.6. The fourth quarter showed some quickening to 4 percent growth and was hailed as a forerunner of steady and solid growth in 1985. But in the first quarter of the new year, the pace came to a near standstill at 1.3 percent growth.

What happened was that government stimulants were being poured into a leaky bucket. The federal government poured money out to its residents who, in turn, bought items made overseas. The trade deficit was, as an order of magnitude, just about equal to the federal deficit. The Keynesian cure that was effective for nations at a time when, as in the case of the U.S., overseas trade was a minuscule portion of Gross National Product was no longer able to work its magic with nations where trade was one-quarter of their total business.

By classical theory, of course, the U.S. should automatically benefit from a reversal of the process, turning deficits into surpluses, because of certain laws of equilibrium held in balance by an invisible hand. Since Americans would be demanding goods made overseas, our demand would boost the value of overseas currencies. Since foreign markets would not be buying our wares, the value of our currency would fall. At some point, we could not buy from them because their goods would be too expensive. They would start buying from us because our goods would be cheap to them, and all would right itself—as Dr. Pangloss might have told them from the beginning.

But in the real world of the 1980s—not the Adam Smithian world of the 1780s—things do not necessarily behave as they should. America ran the greatest deficits any nation has ever run and its currency continued to climb. Why? It was because the American dollar was in demand. Why? First, because during the 1970s and 1980s the rate of interest was high. Second, because the U.S. was a political safe-haven—as contrasted with the rest of the world. Investors holding marks, francs, pounds, or lire wanted to own dollars; their demand for the buck boosted the price. What drove the value of the dollar was not *trade* but *capital* flows.

All this would have been inconceivable in

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the time of Smith and Ricardo, when it was assumed that capital would rarely cross material boundaries. "Every individual endeavors to employ his capital as near home as he can," noted Smith. Ricardo insisted that it would be most imprudent for a merchant to allow his capital to operate out of his sight for any length of time. Yet today, the movement of capital across national boundaries is many, many times greater than the movement of goods.

In the twentieth century, the phrase "comparative advantage" has lost just about all its meaning, if viewed in terms of the "natural attributes" of a nation. The factors of production are portable: capital, technology, raw materials, and managerial know-how. They can be moved easily and swiftly. Multinational corporations scour the planet to find out where best to allocate their resources to produce most cheaply, to pay the least taxes, to maximize after-tax returns. They do this even when they may not, as patriotic persons, want to do it, for the alternative is to be destroyed by a competitor who has no such qualms.

Capital, Labor, Mobility

THIS INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY gives capital an almost unbeatable advantage over labor: the former is mobile, the latter is not. A global corporation can say to its employees: here are our terms; take them or else. The company can always relocate, labor cannot.

Indeed, capital—whether in the form of an industrial producer or in liquid form—can play the same game with governments: do as we say —or else. Billions of dollars can be moved from one nation to another in a few seconds with a few taps on the keys of a terminal. Technology can be transmitted electronically in words and diagrams and codes in a matter of moments. Managers can be transported physically to the other side of the globe within twenty-four hours. Unions and nations are flat-footed losers in a contest with these fleet-footed financial folk.

A second Keynesian measure for stimulating the economy is to have the central bank—the Federal Reserve Board in the United States—loosen the money supply. But how much of a stimulus will such easier credit be if consumers purchase goods made in other countries? As Raymond T. Dalio, president of Bridgewater Associates, an economic consulting firm, sees it —according to the *New York Times* of April 28, 1985—"if the Fed eases credit to spur the economy, it may have limited impacts. Consumers may borrow more money, but—with the dollar still strong—spend more on imports."

The third Keynesian measure is to reduce taxes to spur buying and investing. But if such cuts do not stimulate the economy—in part for reasons already noted—then the government ends up with greater deficits, with an ever-rising portion of the federal income going to service debts, with rising interest rates, with an overvalued dollar, with falling exports and rising imports, with greater unemployment—in sum, with even more of a "labor surplus society."

The trio of Keynesian cures was prescribed for domestic economies that were, more or less, self-contained. While the remedies are not totally invalid for countries today, they have lost much of their ealier potency.

But even at an earlier time, the Keynesian trio had only limited value—as Keynes himself noted in *The General Theory*. If the government was not to be called upon too often to borrow to save the system, it was necessary to rectify the inherently irrational and inequitable distribution of income under capitalism. Without income redistribution, the system would overtax the state. A more just distribution was not only desirable for ethical reasons but was necessary for economic reasons.

Labor's Power

A DEGREE OF SUCH REDISTRIBUTION has taken place in the capitalist world because of the economic and political presence and power of organized labor. The so-called "iron law of wages"—a virtual *given* for Adam Smith and Karl Marx—was repealed by the struggles of unions. Minimum wage laws, unemployment insurance, social security, housing supplements, and family support were additional ways in which working people were able to lift themselves out of the iron cage. The question is whether there will be, in the future, any force

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strong enough to play the role that organized labor has played in the past.

American labor is concerned—as are unions in other countries—for the very obvious reason that it is their very own life that is involved. But viewed more conceptually and comprehensively, our total society ought to be worried because, in the absence of a presence pushing for distributive justice, we can indeed expect what Marx predicted: an immiserization of the masses that may not end up with socialism but with bloody anarchy.

"Alienation" and the Worker

THE ELIMINATION OF A COUNTERFORCE to capitalist "greed" is more of a possibility today than it has ever been—thanks to the robot and to the globalization of the economy. The "robot" can give us the "labor surplus society." The same technological magic that spawns the "robot" is giving us a world economy in which giant multinational multiproduct corporations need not listen to the plaints of their employees. Indeed, they dare not listen, lest their competitors beat them in the marketplace or pirates drive them from control of their own corporations. The same technology, however, can also pulverize, atomize, prostrate the "working class."

The notion of "alienation" at work has been stirred by automation, cybernation, and Charlie Chaplin. Workers are whirling specks on huge gears. In recent years, mountains of manuscripts have described this dehumanization of the person as a process where workers must move to the tempo of the machine, define their chores by the machine, and—now—learn to think like the machine.

But this notion is not new. In 1844, several years before he and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx noted "The Alienation of Labor" in an essay by that name.

> What then do we mean by the alienation of labor? First that the work he performs is extraneous to the worker, that is, it is not personal to him, is not part of his nature; therefore he does not fulfill himself at work, but actually denies himself; feels miserable rather than content, cannot freely develop his physical and mental powers, but instead becomes physically exhausted and mentally debased. Through his work, the laborer loses his identity.

The "alienation" of labor was the loss of identity by workers as "spiritual" (a word that Marx would have abhorred) beings. But, as Marx would reason just a few years later in the *Manifesto*, workers would rediscover their identity as part of a collective in the camaraderie of the work site where they would be compelled to unite. Capitalism would bring workers together under one roof where they would experience a common life, express common complaints, develop common aspirations, organize common voices in the form of unions and political parties. The work site would become a community that, in due time, would replace the oppressive domination of that alien being, the capitalist.

Whether the Marxist millennium—the collective commonwealth—was a misreading or not, there can be no denying that capitalism did produce labor movements in every country in the world, and that these labor movements have profoundly affected economic, political, and social relations across the globe. While the factory fostered spiritual alienation, it also gave birth to a sense of economic, political, social, and ideological solidarity that—as an active element in a capitalist world—tamed, civilized, modified, and ultimately rescued capitalism from its own suicidal compulsions.

That positive force can be eliminated or, certainly, much lessened by modern technology. The work site—as we have come to know it—may no longer be a work site. The work force may be scattered and strewn, many workers never leaving their homes if they so choose, many of them paying only casual visits to the workplace. Even those who have a fixed job at a fixed place are not likely to stay there for any great portion of a lifetime.

Consider this possibility: two hundred machines are packed tightly into an underground box where there is no light, no space for humans, no need for steady ventilation. These robots are set up for flexible manufacture. They can produce a variety of products since, upon instruction, they can drop some tools and pick up other ones. These smart little inorganic imps respond quickly and cleverly to instructions that are fed into the "factory" from a

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terminal operated by a woman in another county or another country. The robots run twenty-four hours a day and never strike. Is this really the future?

Extend the paradigm: in some other part of the world, another person is operating a telephone "central" from home, a job requiring not much more skill than that of the old-fashioned telephone "operator." Still another equally isolated being is keeping the books for a bank where clients are making their daily deposits and withdrawals. Other invisible workers are taking orders for products seen on video screens.

Or consider this: a thousand workers who were members of the steel workers' unions because they were employed in factories making steel are suddenly unemployed—not because of imported steel or even because their corporation opted to move production to another country, but because steel has been replaced by glass, ceramics, plastics, paper, or eeg-wags (gee-gaws spelled backwards). New materials, new forms of transportation, new ways of communicating, new ways of building —all of these make entire careers obsolete. The persons who can identify themselves as steel workers, linotypists, designers, or individuals dedicated to any given occupation or line become fewer as the economy finds itself in constant flux. Add the high number of transients and part-timers in such an economy—indeed, in our present economy. How does one organize such a protean, elusive, atomized "working class," many of whom—operating out of their own homes—will be legally listed as "independent contractors?"

The Need for Unions

IN THE PAST, MOST WORKERS WERE ATTACHED to an employer or, at least, to an industry or occupation. For such people, unions were a necessity—the way in which workers could help to define the future—income, work rules, working conditions, leisure, and the securities expressed in fringes. Such workers were prepared to make sacrifices today—even a long strike and major loss of income—to win a better future.

But if workers do not see themselves attached to anything for any length of time, and if, in addition, there are few if any opportunities for employees to meet, why and how would they form a union? And if they do not form unions as a countervailing power to their employers, what force will there be to win a more equitable and rational distribution of income to keep the inverted pyramid of such an unbalanced society from collapsing?

The robotized, globalized, atomized society we have under consideration is not with us—not yet. But its coming is highly likely and perhaps inevitable. Is there anything that can be done to bring order to a future economy in which a large portion of the population, possibly a majority, will be without work or will be suffering with work in isolation in good times, and in which "good times" will be brief and repeatedly disrupted by massive economic crises and social anarchy?

Two ready answers come to mind: Luddism (antitechnology violence) and the dole.

Not all Luddites act outside the law. In 1596, the City of Danzig hired an assassin to kill the man who invented a machine to save labor on a ribbon loom. Since man was made to work, by God's edict after The Fall, anyone who contravened that commandment was a sinner against the Lord and properly condemned to die. In our time, such unabashed truculence and righteousness would not be acceptable. But we do have our legal Luddites who would like to halt or at least brake the onrush of technology. Their ideas are not without merit in the abstract, but difficult to implement in the concrete. Should any country put a halt to the march of the "robot," it would easily be invaded by the monster as it spewed out its goods in another land whose hunger or ambition made it less sensitive to the macro perils of the mini chip.

The other alternative—the dole—is rejected forthrightly by the Committee on the Evolution of Work in its first report. Bluntly, it states: "We do not accept the dole as a realistic or desirable alternative to gainful employment in productive jobs."

This flat statement is timely, coming at a moment when many, if not most, Americans identify "liberalism" with the dole—in whatever form. For such people, the phrase "wel-

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fare state" refers to a society in which many people are "on welfare."

To unions, the term "welfare state" refers to a society that seeks, as the Preamble to the Constitution suggests, to "promote the general welfare" and not to a nation where there is a large and growing portion of the population "on welfare." After all, who supports the people on the dole if not working people? The poor are too poor to pay taxes and the rich too smart to pay taxes, so the working stiffs—in the final analysis—are Mr. and Ms. Taxpayer.

But however working people may feel about a society that carries an ever bigger part of the nation on the dole, the dole per se is bad. It becomes economically impossible when the burden gets too heavy; it is bad for the recipients who are doomed to an empty life of dependence. Historically, it has been the way that great and overly rich empires, with income from their external vassals, bought off riots and revolutions at home.

Economically, politically, psychologically, and ethically, the dole is bad. The term "dole" does not refer to assistances extended to persons who are physically, mentally, or otherwise in personal distress. A society's commitment to care for its unfortunate is what makes a collection of human animals a civilized citizenry. But an economy so structured that it turns to a dole to "take care of" an ever-growing horde of jobless in a "labor surplus society" is doomed.

Labor's Agenda Endangered

LABOR'S AGENDA INCLUDES A NATION (a world) where people have jobs—without which life is economically endangered and spiritually tortured. How, then, does one construct a society in which all those who wish to and can work do work?

For the owners of the economy this is not an important question. Employment is not their bottom line. A return, preferably a handsome return, on investment is. To working people, employment—a useful life—is the *sine qua non* of their existence. Until now, the pressure of organized labor has resulted in a measure of distributive justice to allow capitalism to balance demand with supply. But what happens from now on?

A realistic scenario—an agenda for the years from now until the year 2000—falls into two time segments: the near and the distant future. In the distant future, we will be confronted with a social order fraught with the problems of robotization, globalization, and atomization. But we are not there yet. And in the interim, as we slip toward such a new world, what shall labor do so that it can be an effective voice, both economically and politically, in humanizing the necessary changes?

"Humanizing" is not used here as an act of *noblesse oblige*, compassion, or charity. By humanization of social policy I mean that the economy should serve the people—and not vice versa. If the economy becomes our *end* and people become our *means* to satisfy that end, then we will suicidally have reversed ends and means. The purpose will have been lost and the process will have perverted the purpose.

The Pace of Change

WILL LABOR BE ABLE TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE role in creating an economy that will serve people?

The bad news is that labor does not have the answers to two prime questions: First, what social policies can provide employment to people in a globalized and robotized economy? Second, what can labor do right now to conserve or compose the necessary strength to influence future policies?

The good news is that labor knows what it doesn't know and, in this act of wisdom, has undertaken an inquiry into its necessary, proper, and feasible role in the coming decades.

As in the case of Vatican II, the labor movement will—like the church—continue its commitment to its historic principle, without which its soul is lost. But again, as in the case of the church, its soul-searching is likely to unleash forces of unpredictable directions and proportions. Meanwhile, the process is under way—a process that by its generation of new attitudes and acts will change the character of American labor—and, perhaps, of the total society.

The one sentence in the committee's report that caught the most public attention was a blunt admission: "Unions find themselves be-

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hind the pace of change." Enemies of labor read this to mean that unions were now obsolete; friends of labor read this to mean that unions would now become more relevant than ever. The press, in general, featured the line because, as in the case of Vatican II, a large, established, seemingly rigid organization was issuing a top-down call to its members to think anew.

It was this line in the second report, entitled, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions," issued in February 1985, that made the headlines and set the heads of labor in motion. Report recommendations went beyond urging unions to do what they had always done but to do it better. "We must expand our notions of what it is that workers can do through their unions," says the report. Ends as well as means, objectives as well as methods, should be reevaluated.

What is an appropriate way to reevaluate? The answer: back to basics. For unions, the basic is the worker—his or her needs, wants, desires, hopes, and dreams. Some hundred years ago, when the American Federation of Labor was founded, those animal impulses and human aspirations found expression in the ancient trinity of "wages, hours, and working conditions." Today, workers want more: "to have a say in the 'how, why, and wherefore' of their work." That old phrase, "industrial democracy," has become an emotional entity at a time when it seems to have lost much of its ideology. Whether this urge to be a "somebody" instead of just a "something" is a revolt against the "dehumanization" of the workplace, or whether it is an expression of a new self-image perceived by this generation, the fact is that working people increasingly do wish to have a greater say over what happens to them on the job.

Traditionally, unions have been very suspicious of arrangements that come under the rubric of "quality-of-worklife" programs. Such schemes were viewed as gimmicks to lure employees away from unions, a view that is now changing. "Several major unions have developed such [quality-of-worklife] programs and report a positive membership response," notes the committee, that "the labor movement should seek to accelerate their development."

This recommendation, as well as others, however, are all issued with a caveat. These suggestions are not edicts. "A new orthodoxy is the precise opposite of the proper approach," notes the report.

In this spirit, "back to basics" is less a return to some program than a return to the grass roots. The idea is for the leadership to put its ear to the ground: to talk less and to listen more, to be less oral and more aural, to find out how workers feel and think and act—whether unionized or nonunion.

Inevitable Adjustments

IT IS IN THIS OPEN SPIRIT THAT THE REPORT makes a series of suggestions on organizing, bargaining, internal democratization, and getting the union message out to the public. They are all somewhat novel, presented as an agenda for discussion rather than as directions for action. The action—for the moment—is to engage in one big pow-wow, a massive discussion about what is to be done.

The suggestion that seems to get the most attention is the desirability of merger among unions. Indeed, in the report there is a special appendix (the only item with an appendix) entitled "Merger Guidelines." In part, the merger movement is under way because several national unions do not have enough members to justify independent existence or, more pragmatically, to carry the overhead. A merger offers the advantages of large-scale economies. But there is another reason why mergers are desirable as well as necessary. Companies historically identified with a product are no longer producing that product or have taken on a protean existence as they turn out dozens or hundreds of different lines. The giants who grew horizontally have gone vertical and conglomerate. While companies move from turf to turf or over many different turfs, unions remain stuck in their jurisdiction. To overcome this, some unions have diversified. Some have tried multi-union bargaining. Others have merged.

Viewed historically, it is inevitable that there will be macro adjustments in union structure. When business was local, unions were local. When corporations and industries went

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national, unions went national. When business goes conglomerate, so must unions.

The various suggestions of the report are all ways to get labor thinking about how to minimize its losses and maximize its potential, to enable unions to be a reasonably effective voice in the shaping of national economic policies.

Having such input, however, does not mean that labor and labor alone will be able to grapple with the metamacro challenge of a robotized globe. The macro solutions will have to be political; collective bargaining alone cannot do the big job. Consider a hypothetical circumstance: a company employs 1,000 workers—under union contract. At expiration, the company introduces robots and discharges 900 workers; the other 100 are union members.

The union solution is to cut work time so that all 1,000 will have jobs. To do so the forty-hour work week will have to be cut to the four-hour work week, or something like that, without a reduction in weekly pay.

The employer refuses to go along. He is ready to double the pay of the 100 employees he is retaining. The union asks these 100 to strike. They are reluctant. But, being good loyal unionists who love their brothers, they do go on strike. The employer moves his robots to Portugal. There, in an exaggerated nutshell, is the problem of a union on a robotized planet.

As I see it—this thought is quite personal and highly tentative—the titanic struggle in the last decade of this century or the first decade of the next will be between megamultinational corporations and sovereign states —not unlike the historical conflict between church and state in the past. Who's the boss? What the little corporation mentioned in the frightening fantasy above could do to a union, global corporations could do to nations. They could dictate both economic and political policies to governments under the threat of removing capital, technology, employment, and sources of revenue from any country that did not do the bidding of the corporate overlords. The "sovereignties" could lose their sovereignty. The whole world could just be a colony ruled by corporations headquartered in the Cayman Islands, Crete, or the Isle of Man.

Should this fantasy ever become fact, what can nations do?

My guess—perhaps, my unthinking wish—is that they will do what unions have been doing in the past: they will unite. They have the power to refuse companies the right to import or export capital, to locate or relocate facilities, to employ labor, to tap raw materials. Above all else, they have the power to close their markets—to both goods and services emanating from hostile exploiters.

A country like the United States could probably do this on its own. It could do it better with the help of a few natural allies. But if nations, large and small, take collective action to defend their sovereignty against the alien dictator, then the world will witness the reenactment of an earlier drama when governments of "industrial democracies" evolved policies to civilize and "socialize" their domestic capitalisms. This time the grand drama will be replayed on a global stage.

Should such a worldwide movement of nations in some not too distant future search for a rallying cry, it might try: "Nations of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your pains and a world to gain." □

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Philip Bronstein

Intriguing in the Philippines

Can the Aquino Regime Bring Stable Democracy?

Inside the Philippine military camp thirty-six hours into the rebellion against Ferdinand Marcos, there is a sense of isolation and despair. Bleary-eyed rebel soldiers, unsure of the outcome of their action or its impact throughout the rest of the country, continue to man the windows and doorways, afraid to sleep or to take their hands off their weapons. Despite the brave support for their cause by millions of urban Filipinos, the rebels have seen the civilian barricades of People's Power dwindle in the early morning hours while loyalist tanks are rolling in the streets and Marcos seems increasingly entrenched in his palace ten miles away.

Fidel Ramos, the general who has led the uprising, along with Marcos Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, jogs through the camp in a T-shirt and shorts just before 2 a.m. Highly agitated, Ramos stops near where I am sitting on the grass to say that an assault by Marcos forces is imminent and all foreign journalists should leave for their own safety. My own anxiety is not calmed by Enrile, who later emerges from a nap to tell me that he has refused calls from Marcos because "the president can be very persuasive."

At sunrise, seven loyalist helicopters swoop suddenly toward the landing strip of the main rebel camp in attack formation. They are armed with rockets and 60mm machine guns. Those of us watching from the ground scatter for cover.

But the helicopters merely land and unload; their pilots turn out to be defectors to the rebel cause. Their act buoyed instantly the deteriorating morale of the anti-Marcos rebellion. "Now, Marcos will send no more planes to bomb us because they may also defect," explained one colonel.

But in the joy of the moment, as the pilots tearfully hug their new comrades and make their way to headquarters to shake hands with Ramos and Enrile, I recall that it was Enrile himself who had been accused of receiving a kickback when the U.S.-based Sikorsky Aircraft, Inc. sold these same helicopters to the Philippines in 1983 in a deal tainted by the kind of scandal which reflected the Marcos era. (Enrile has denied any wrongdoing.) That irony was temporarily lost in the public exultation the next day when Marcos fled the country and we were all left to contemplate the stunning reality of this relatively bloodless, but seemingly monumental change.

Given 20 years of Marcos rule, with its attendant violence, authoritarianism, bitterness and ruthless machinations, who could not be moved when Corazon Aquino took her oath of office Tuesday "in the name of and by the will of the Filipino people," even while Marcos was still holding out in the palace. It was a moment of history that had seemed impossible a few days before but that left labyrinthine questions in its wake. Aquino advisers, who had lived in fear for over a decade, suddenly talked about their prospective posts in the new government and the fundamental changes they would initiate.

A VOICE OF DIVISIVE BITTERNESS, however, was raised at the back of the room where the Aquino inaugural ceremony was taking place. Attorney Rafael Evangelista, a long-time oppositionist, was grumbling about Enrile, the architect of Marcos's martial law, who now sat on Aquino's left as her new Defense Minister. Enrile's appointment was a necessary political deal meant to recognize his influence within

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the military and reward his role in the revolution. "When martial law was declared in 1972," Evangelista told me, "three truckloads of Marines raided my house with a warrant signed by Enrile. I promised I'd sue the s.o.b. when there was a change of government. Now I can't. He's a damn hero."

Two days later, with Marcos finally gone and Aquino installed in her office at the presidential palace, some were suffering a more good-natured culture shock. Human rights lawyer Rene Saguisag, a frequent target of the Marcos intelligence agencies, was now presidential spokesman. "I woke up this morning worried, as usual, whether NISA (the National Intelligence Security), was tapping my phone. Then I realized, NISA is ours now." But many of Aquino's other advisers and veterans of the struggle found themselves left in the cold by infighting, power struggles, and old jealousies dormant during the Marcos years.

As I write, four months after Marcos's departure, such irritations, ironies and shifting allegiances have only become more pronounced. There are now serious behind-the-scenes maneuvers within the Aquino cabinet to oust Enrile as a threatening vestige of darker days. And there are almost daily reports that Enrile is plotting a coup to preempt his firing and in the face of government human rights and corruption investigations that may land at his doorstep.

Just a few days ago, Aquino's Good Government Commission, charged with probing the wealth of Marcos allies, announced formally that Enrile's millionaire status is one of its primary targets. Also, a few weeks ago, in the midst of rumors that Aquino was about to accede to the demands of progressives in her government and fire Enrile, the defense minister suddenly left a cabinet meeting and traveled to the northern provinces, his and Marcos's home base. On arrival, he was met by hundreds of Marcos loyalists who cheered him as a hero despite his crucial role in overthrowing the old regime. It is likely that Marcos ordered such a greeting. If so, it was another brilliant Marcos move, one which, as usual, performed many functions. It let Enrile know the door to negotiation was open for any future alliance. It impressed upon Enrile that he may need Marcos for support should he clash with Aquino. And, most important, it indebted Enrile to Marcos.

In the Philippines, *utan na loob,* or debt of gratitude, is a major cultural institution and continues to help create empires. In Honolulu two weeks later, Marcos denied he played any role in his supporters' reception for Enrile. But, he told me, he had instructed loyalists to treat Enrile well because "he's like one of my family."

The recent aborted coup attempt by Marcos's running mate in the elections, Arturo Tolentino, has left Enrile in an even stronger position. His participation would have seriously undermined Aquino. But his refusal to join the rebellion left Aquino in his debt and demonstrated to all sides that he alone has the political strength to institute major change. Far from establishing Aquino's ability to handle crises, the incident highlights the more profound problems she faces. It will further fragment the military and discourage urgently needed foreign investment while boosting Aquino's greatest potential rival.

Enrile remains the largest short-term threat to Aquino in spite of his protests to the contrary and demonstrations of loyalty. His chameleon character is the perfect embodiment of the murky alliances and instability which constantly disrupt the national need for strong democratic institutions. Ominously, Enrile told me a week after the rebellion that "the president can fire me anytime she wants. But I think my boys in the military will have something to say about that." He has a strong military following and has clashed with the new president on issues like the retention of the country's two U.S. military bases. He also realizes the need to retain power in a country where those who lose their positions must atone for their excesses. His wife has told friends that Enrile believes he is a dead man, literally, if he is removed. The danger can come either from Marcos loyalists who feel he betrayed their hero or from those who suffered under Marcos.

While he denies both personal ambition and any intention to move against Aquino, he will do whatever is necessary to thwart efforts to

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unseat him. The presence in the government of Enrile and other Marcos holdovers, some of whom are accused as torturers, symbolizes the fragility of the Philippine experiment.

But the Enrile issue, part of a larger Aquino government policy dilemma of reconciliation and forgiveness versus justice and redress of Marcos-era sins, is merely one of a long list of problems. Budding oligarchs are accumulating economic bases. Some of the old elite families Marcos replaced are regaining their former footholds, dimming the possibility of serious structural reform.

Aquino herself is a part of that elite, although she lives modestly in Manila. Labor relations on her sprawling family hacienda to the north were made a campaign issue by Marcos. Despite her appeal to the average Filipino, she remains aloof, wanting to keep what she described to me as a "certain amount of distance" from her constituents. Educated at private schools in the U.S. and intensely religious, she would literally bend over backwards to avoid the embraces of old friends during speaking engagements. She was as uncomfortable with her campaign image as a naive former housewife as she was with the ritual of supporters wiping her feet as they do to statues of saints. "Definitely I'm not a saint," she said. "But at the same time I'd like some respect given to me."

When I saw her less than a week after she assumed office, she had changed remarkably, appearing far more authoritative than she had as a candidate and even speaking in a deeper, more measured voice. Still, she remains likeable and genuinely modest. She is also a tough presence at cabinet meetings, but she presides over a group constantly at war with one another on the most basic policy questions, and aides say she takes too long to make up her mind once issues are presented to her. Her calm, fatalist approach to life gives one the impression that nothing fazes her.

HAVING GROWN UP WITH NUNS and chaperones, she does not have the gritty sense of Philippine politics once practiced by her assassinated husband, Benigno Aquino. A friend of both Marcos and Benigno Aquino during their early days in public office describes scenes where the two men would sit in his house arguing over who had killed more of the other's allies. The fact that Cory Aquino is not versed in the traditional political trench warfare is what made her so attractive to Filipinos tired of the past. But even her own supporters worry that her isolation from her poor constituents will mean a continued policy bias toward wealthy, urban Filipinos.

Marcos's allies point out bitterly that the Aquino revolution was engineered and run by only two percent of the population. The statement is accurate but the inferred logic, that the majority of Filipinos were behind their man, is not. Some of Aquino's associates are true progressives but almost all of them also come from the upper classes, descendants of the *illustrados* created by the Spaniards 400 years ago to run the Philippines in perpetuity. Historically, control of the Philippines has been an incestuous affair of the elite. Indeed, Marcos and anti-Marcos factions are filled with members of the same families.

The Lao sisters are one example. Carmen Lao is married to the father of a Marcos son-in-law. Conchita Lao is married to Genny Lopez, a member of the country's most financially powerful premartial law clan, whose members were jailed by Marcos. Pacita Lao is married to Raul Manglapus, a Marcos opponent and perennial presidential candidate who is the head of the Social Democratic movement in the Philippines and at odds with the old oligarchy represented by the Lopezes. Liberal Party head Eva Kalaw, one of the few female politicians thrown in jail by Marcos, has a sister who ran Marcos's film censorship board. Perhaps the most notably divided family was the Ongpins. Jimmy Ongpin is now Aquino's finance minister and architect of her economic policy. His brother, Roberto, was Marcos's minister of trade and industry. The two men reportedly never spoke during Marcos's time, but Jimmy is rumored to have helped his brother leave the country after the revolution. Even in Aquino's own family, her cousin, Eduardo Cojuangco, was Marcos's most influential crony. He controlled the once-vast cocoanut industry under Marcos. Aquino's husband, opposition leader Benigno Aquino, once threatened to hang Cojuangco publicly if given the

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chance, a statement many believe led to Aquino's assassination in 1983.

And even Aquino's vice-president, Salvador Laurel, was a recent (1980) convert from Marcos's KBL party, as are many of his colleagues in his UNIDO faction. In spite of Cory Aquino's insistence that nepotism will be erased from government, her brother, José Cojuangco, wields power as head of the political party that formed her strongest campaign base. He has placed some of his allies in key positions in the new government.

And yet vindictiveness, rather than reconciliation, has often been the motivating force in Aquino government dealings with those tainted by their Marcos association, causing a loss of some competent and needed economic experts whose sin may have been merely their efforts to survive in bad times.

While some Filipinos starve, government priorities seem to have been pursuit of Marcos's stolen fortune and the miscreants of his administration. One minor Marcos official who did not enrich himself jokes that his friends tell him he will be prosecuted for "unexplained poverty and stupidity." Mysteriously, more influential Marcos cronies have had sequestered property returned amid rumors of bribes. Others have been traveling in and out of the country even though their names are on hold/departure lists at the airport. The widespread removal of local elected officials by José Cojuangco's ally, Aquino's Local Government Minister Aquilino Pinmentel, has embittered much of the electorate, particularly in areas where the ousted bureaucrats were considered good men who won their seats fairly. Although Aquino claimed the move was designed as a cleansing action, many of the appointments were purely political, and some of the new men, called Officers-in-Charge, have corruption cases pending against them.

Such stories go beyond bad judgment to a more endemic corruption Aquino may not have the resources to root out. Marcos did not invent corruption in the Philippines, nor did he institutionalize it. He merely centralized it.

Philippine officeholders have nearly always enriched themselves; Aquino's rectitude is an anomaly. Even Cabinet members are not spared constant accusations. Jimmy Ongpin's alleged misdeeds illustrate both Aquino's inherited problems and the convoluted workings of Manila politics. Papers uncovered after Marcos fled revealed that Ongpin's huge mining concern, Benguet, was actually owned by Imelda Marcos's brother. Ongpin said he wasn't aware of that fact and besides, Imelda's brother never interfered. Ongpin, the man Aquino has entrusted with the country's precious resources, has also been charged with receiving kickbacks in an unrelated business situation by yet another of her own commissions.

Many of the new government's machinations have no effect outside Manila, where the peasants who make up the country's vast majority remain economically devastated and inherently skeptical that politics in the republic will ever affect their own living conditions. By now the wonder and excitement of victory over Marcos has faded away. My own discussions with major players in the Philippine political stage—from the Marcoses and their allies to Aquino officials to insurgency leaders—leave me with the picture of a country groping its way along the edge of a precipice.

"Almost no one in the Senate knows what's going on in the Philippines," says Doug Olin, a Senate Budget Committee staffer who has written several reports on the country. "They all thought we fixed the Philippines. We're all so ecstatic about our glamorous democratic revolution. No one wants the bad news that the Philippines is still broken."

The contending forces in the Philippines, mutable as they may be, have powerfully conflicting and potentially irreconcilable interests and ideologies. They are warring in a country already burdened by its traditions but without an established identity of its own. "In a way, things were a lot simpler when Marcos was here," says Saguisag, a Harvard-trained attorney who is on leave as Aquino's spokesman to investigate the Marcos government's atomic power plant deal with Westinghouse.

Saguisag insists that integrity, which is now personified in Aquino, has become the most important Philippine leadership commodity.

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"Her opponents will have to find a real pretty boy or pretty girl to match Cory. They need someone with honesty and who have they got? No one." But probity may not be the main criterion in running a country used to masterful manipulation from its leader.

In the face of growing criticism that Aquino is too inexperienced and indecisive for the job, Saguisag has drawn up a list of achievements of the new government which suggests that Aquino has moved rapidly to shrug off the constraints of Marcos's twenty years in power.

She has released political prisoners, restored habeas corpus, established a commission to write a new constitution, reshaped the Supreme Court and encouraged an expanding free press. Still, there is an expectation among Filipinos that drastic change must be accomplished with the same speed as the events which brought her to power. But even if foreign aid does begin to arrive in larger increments, she incurs the wrath of the supply-side businessmen in her cabinet if she spends it on income-generating local projects. If she injects the money into broader infrastructure projects, the long-suffering peasantry will object.

Aquino is painted into the same corner on overall economic policy: free market versus government-run social programs. In a developed country there is room to grapple with these problems. With its fifty years as a U.S. colony, its 80-plus percent literacy rate, its widespread use of English, and its Catholic majority making it the only predominantly Christian country in Asia, it is easy to forget that the Philippines is also a bankrupt Third-World country. It has had the only declining GNP in all of non-Communist Asia and a foreign debt that now exceeds $26 billion dollars. Its main export industries like sugar have been permanently crippled by mismanagement and world recession. Foreign investment, an essential ingredient of economic recovery, is suspicious of the political climate and is still waiting to come in.

One executive of a large multinational corporation that was reported to be opening a Philippine facility told me a few weeks ago, "We'd be foolish to invest there now. We don't know what's going to happen next. Plus, the Aquino government has not come up with any economic game plan. We don't know what the rules are."

Some 70 percent of the country lives below the poverty line, calculated at just over $700 annual per capita income. The U.S. has been of little help, paying only what Saguisag calls "lip service and pocket change." The "cobwebs of doubt" about the Reagan administration's true commitment to Aquino—the term used by Laurel which enraged George Shultz—are well-founded. Reagan aides like Don Regan hung on to Marcos till the last minute. When Marcos, before he fled, called Paul Laxalt, Laxalt went to a White House meeting and asked Regan, Reagan, and Shultz for advice. Shultz, reflecting the State Department view, said Marcos was finished. Regan said "We can do a lot worse than Marcos." Reagan provided the out, suggesting that Laxalt tell Marcos to come to the U.S.

Regan is not alone in believing the U.S. may have done worse with Aquino. The Reagan administration is unhappy with her efforts to negotiate an end to the insurgency, her release of jailed Communist leaders, her unwillingness to commit to a renewal of the rental agreement on the two strategically important American bases, and the influence of progressives in her cabinet. In particular, it is sensitive to the anti-American sentiments of Aquino's Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo and the nationalist statements of Labor Secretary Bobbit Sanchez and Planning Minister Solita Monsod. Sanchez has criticized multinational corporations while Monsod has suggested selective repudiation of the foreign debt. Both ministers have since been reined in by Aquino.

Aquino herself has not been pleased with the performance of the Reagan administration. Friends say she felt like her family members were "second-class citizens" while they lived in Boston during her husband's self-imposed exile and that Benigno Aquino's assassination might have been avoided if the U.S. had publicly and privately supported his return to the Philippines. Ronald Reagan's personal friendship with Marcos does not go unnoticed in Manila either. Reagan's insistence after the elections that "both sides cheated," and his insistence on

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calling Marcos in Hawaii during a stopover there, have added strength to a growing anti-American sentiment in the Philippines.

In general, the Washington establishment has patted itself on the back for its role in the Philippine revolution and moved on to other foreign policy issues without providing any substantive financial support. Contrary to the view of some analysts who believe the change in the Philippines proves the U.S. has learned it can end dictatorships if it acts early enough, the real message the Reagan administration seems to have learned is that it can come in at the last minute, botch things up, and still take the credit.

Although Reagan had promised increased aid, much of the money has been hung up in bureaucratic snags. When George Shultz, Aquino's biggest admirer in the administration, finally went to Manila with a $200 million check, Arroyo cautioned against reacting "like jumping chimpanzees." With merry-go-round logic, the administration and Congress seem to want Aquino to succeed, understand that she needs money to do it, but admit that she won't get that money from the U.S. Wharton Econometrics has estimated the country will need $12 billion over the next five years to recover. The U.S. aid package now totals about $500 million.

Help from other countries has not been pouring in either. At a meeting of the Philippines' creditor countries in Japan last May, no one committed to any major increase in aid. U.S. State Department analysts say the Aquino government has not shown sufficient economic reform, that many of the business monopolies so detrimental under Marcos—like government control of the fertilizer industry—still exist. Privatization has not been instituted fast enough, they say, and there are no support structures set up to filter money to the proper places.

Japan—the other potentially major contributor—has been hamstrung by revelations from the Aquino Good Government investigations of bribes and kickbacks during the Marcos regime involving Japanese officials and executives. In fairness to the Aquino government, its ability to unravel an inherited catastrophe is bound to be limited. During a transition meeting I attended between Aquino technocrats and employees of the Imelda Marcos-run Ministry of Human Settlements, the complexity of the ministry infrastructure seemed to overwhelm everyone. Expecting to find evidence of massive fraud, after which they would abolish the ministry, the technocrats found instead a maze of mortgage subagencies and unfathomable operational formulas.

Many Philippine experts in Washington and even influential Filipinos, like industrialist Enrique Zobel, one of the world's wealthiest businessmen, who supported Marcos but made his fortune largely without favors, give Aquino only a year or less unless more fundamental reform is achieved. They cite the economy, the battles between the conservative social viewpoint embodied by people like Zobel and Jimmy Ongpin, and the approach of progressives like Saguisag, and the residual strength of rightist elements led by Enrile, the military, and well-funded Marcos loyalists.

In the long term, the main political concern continues to be the stubbornly entrenched and persistently growing Marxist-oriented insurgency. Marcos's departure deprived the insurgents of a handy focal point, but Aquino's problems give them renewed hope.

Still, the perils Aquino faces do not change the magnitude of the Philippine revolution, which gave the world an example of democracy arising from the sheer demand of the people. Although it was made possible by a unique convergence of events, rather than a concentrated effort by any of the particular groups now taking credit, the Filipino model is providing the context for its possible application in places like South Korea and Pakistan. For that very reason, the way in which Aquino handles her government's problems becomes significant beyond the Philippines and will determine whether her presidency is part of a sustained success or merely a historical footnote.

The question is, can Aquino, armed with only her moral authority, a few words of encouragement from Reagan and Shultz and dribbles of foreign aid, create a structure of

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democratic power that will function as well as Marcos's dictatorial control?

As I write at the beginning of July, the situation in the Philippines is fluid and there is a chance things will have altered dramatically even by the time this story appears. But no matter how quick the change, and despite the Filipino penchant for tactical alterations, it is worthwhile to look at some of the groups that will define any changes in the years to come:

• **The military and the right wing.** The failure of the July coup attempt led by a few intransigent officers loyal to Marcos and with Tolentino as its figurehead did not weed out all the malcontents in the Philippine military. It only brushed aside a fringe element, leaving a much larger and more potent group free to consider its options without minor annoyances from zealots. It is unclear how many in the military actually support Enrile or how many support Ramos. But it is evident that the majority of soldiers share the view of Enrile, Ramos, and the Reagan administration that the insurgents are being coddled by Aquino—even invited into her government—and can be dealt with only through force of arms.

The daily average of military casualties during encounters with the Communist party of the Philippines' (CPP) military wing, the New People's Army (NPA), is only slightly less than it was under Marcos and the battles are increasingly savage. Many officers and their men are convinced that Aquino is indirectly assisting the NPA in its assaults by refusing to order a countrywide offensive. It is safe to assume that they will not withstand the deaths of their colleagues for long, especially while they feel their hands are being tied. Enrile has spoken for them, calling a negotiated settlement with the Communists "impossible," even while he says he will abide by Aquino's approach.

The Reform the Armed Forces (RAM) movement, which spearheaded the February rebellion, does believe in a professional military, free of the rampant corruption and favoritism under Marcos. Its members are not, however, political liberals or potential supporters of Amnesty International. One of their more glamorous figures, Colonel Greg "Gringo" Honasan, Enrile's personal security man, has been unofficially accused by the Task Force Detainees human rights group in the Philippines of cutting the ears off prisoners during fighting against Moslem secessionist rebels on the southern island of Mindanao. Retired General Luis Villa-Real, who provided guidance for RAM members during the rebellion against Marcos, is the Philippine head of the World Anti-Communist League and now heads the chief government security agency.

Under Marcos, the budding RAM group was a favorite of U.S. officials looking for a bright spot in a dim picture. The Reagan administration would now not endorse a coup, even one instituted by RAM and Enrile. But one administration source told me recently that "if we were presented with a fait accompli, there's not much we could do."

One of the RAM officers had warned me in June that they might overthrow Aquino if they felt she was selling the country to the Communists. I asked him after the July coup attempt if his group was involved. He said: "No. We're still making our own plans."

• **Marcos loyalists.** The failure of Tolentino in his heroically comic effort to take over Manila's grandest hotel on his way to the presidency does not mean that Marcos no longer has supporters. His friends recognize that he will likely never be president again. But they do believe, if he can get back to the Philippines, he may advise and pull the strings of some coalition that may replace Aquino.

Marcos has always been, and remains, immensely popular with Ilocanos, the clannish and prideful people in the northern part of the country. Ilocanos are disproportionately represented in the military, which Marcos has already pinpointed as the most likely source of a successful coup. While Aquino struggles economically, money will not be a problem for the Marcos faction. Although much of the fortune he is alleged to have spirited out of the country has been frozen, he can still retrieve enough of it to buy influence.

Imelda Marcos, though she might have attracted more hostility than adulation as First Lady, is still vigorous and ambitious herself. As Robin Leach, the host of American television's "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," said

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recently on his show: "Imelda, if you're listening, you're still famous, babe. They may get the black bras but they can't take that away from you."

• **The Social Democrats.** In Philippine shorthand they are called Socdems, as opposed to liberal democrats (Libdems), who are molded after the Hubert Humphrey American model, and national democrats (Natdems), a blanket term applied to leftists and Communists. The Socdems have been a shadowy but influential group in the opposition to Marcos and now hold some prominent positions in the new government. They believe in a mix of capitalism and state programs. "We want to reformulate capitalism and inject humanist, democratic positions into basically socialist ideology," says Jerry Esguerra, a Socdem strategist. One of their more concrete notions is to "leverage social capital, like taxes, to encourage people's capital." The program may seem a little fuzzy but the Socdems have their nontheoretical side as well. Just before and right after the election, one Socdem faction formed urban guerrilla groups whose aim was to attack Marcos institutions and possibly assassinate key Marcos officials and even Marcos himself.

Unlike the Communists, the Socdems have no Central Committee and so they have grown into separate groups with sometimes conflicting notions. There are clerics and "Christian-oriented" Socdems who are anticommunist. But most Socdems share many Communist party notions when it comes to land reform and people's cooperatives. They are competing with the CPP for their mass base and are the only other group with a serious following among the young. They have benefited more than any other party from Aquino's victory.

Pimentel is considered a Socdem as well as, to a lesser degree, Agriculture Minister Mitra and even Aquino herself. Benigno Aquino directed several Socdem groups during his American exile. "We can get to Cory," says Esguerra. "We have a share in her." The Socdems also share an ideological enemy with the Natdems in conservative government policymakers like Jimmy Ongpin. In 1985, an effort to combine many of the Socdems and the Natdems in a political party called Bayan disintegrated when the Natdems suddenly demanded a larger share of representatives. Since then, there have been renewed efforts at a tactical alliance.

Raul Manglapus, who returned in March after his own American exile, is one Socdem leader who, despite his long absence, could reemerge as a national figure outside the Aquino government. Manglapus is a charismatic personality and an inspirational speaker who also happens to be an Ilocano, capable of wooing away some Marcos supporters.

If the Socdems have claim to a political entity right now, it is the PDP-Laban, the party formed by Benigno Aquino and the one that ran Cory Aquino's campaign. PDP-Laban has a strong grass-roots organization, cultivated by Pimentel and Mitra, although it is currently headed by José Cojuangco, considered an unrepentant capitalist by Socdem purists.

• **Laurel and the UNIDO and Liberal parties.** Vice-president Laurel surprisingly suppressed his own presidential interests to take a back seat to Aquino in the last election. He has not been trusted by Aquino's people—"We count our fingers when we shake his hand," one cabinet minister told me—but has acted responsibly and well as vice-president. He resisted urgings by his more aggressive backers to quit the coalition after it became clear that his UNIDO party, which emerged after Aquino's assassination as the dominant opposition group, was being pushed aside by the PDP-Laban in the new government. But an alliance between UNIDO and other existing opposition parties could prove formidable.

• **The Communist party and the "Left."** When the news that Marcos had fled reached the jail cell of Ed de la Torre, a leader of the National Democratic Front, the political organization of the Communist party of the Philippines, the military intelligence officer assigned to watch him look puzzled. "He asked me, 'How are we supposed to know who our enemy is now?' " de la Torre recalled. The military has obviously since regained its bearings, but the significance of the question was not lost on de la Torre.

Aquino's victory meant opportunity for the CPP, a chance to come in out of the cold. It had made a major blunder during the presiden-

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tial campaign by recommending a boycott, assuming that Marcos would cheat himself back into office anyway. Angry over their unwillingness to help and anxious to win U.S. support, Aquino then shut the CPP out of the civil disobedience effort after the election. For the first time since it was formed in 1968, the CPP did not provide bodies for street protests.

After an agonizing self-assessment and a leadership shake-up, the CPP has now regrouped. It has entered into ceasefire negotiations with the government, praises Cory publicly, and will no longer dismiss the middle and upper classes who put Aquino into power as insignificant.

But even influential CPP Central Committee members admit the efforts at a negotiated settlement are just stalling tactics, intended to help them recover their strength. Their corps of trained military leaders will never lay down their arms, particularly if Aquino continues to appear threatened from the right.

José Maria Sison, the former CPP chairman released from jail by Aquino, has said that "the reactionary classes want a temporary ceasefire to consolidate their forces in the belief that the ever-worsening economic and political problems will blow over." Even at full strength, the estimated 16,000 full-time NPA soldiers can only stage hit-and-run raids. But the CPP takes the long view, slowly setting up shop in rural barrios and exerting influence in labor unions and among the urban poor. The CPP remains the best organized and most durable political party in the country. It will bide its time, refusing to attack Aquino personally while sorting out its internal differences.

Agrarian reform is the only area where the CPP challenges Aquino directly. Her idea of tenant ownership does not reach the "land to the landless" demands of the party. If a right-wing coup succeeded, the CPP would suffer the most; its leaders would undoubtedly be rounded up again and jailed. The CPP, by its structural nature, is also remarkably inept at quick decision-making. Since the 1983 Aquino assassination, when the middle classes began spontaneous demonstrations, the CPP has been consistently behind the political wave. With their new two-pronged program of above-ground political involvement and continued military activity, they have finally caught up.

After laying out all the weaknesses of the Aquino government and all of the obstacles, we cannot forget that she offers a very real possibility of the first relatively free and fair elections in the Philippines in the last decade and a half. The elections, which would include seats in a Senate and House, can be a giant safety valve.

This is one possible electoral scenario: Enrile finds he can satisfy his ambitions by running for the Senate from the north. Sison and other above-ground Communists realize they can be elected to national positions and slowly move away from their armed colleagues. Marcos loyalists win a few national seats and local gubernatorial and mayoral posts, deflecting their frustration. Too hopeful perhaps, but not impossible. Such a snowball effect would take care of Aquino's political problems through legitimate democratic institutions. That would leave only the economic and social problems.

Aquino's planned state visit to the U.S. in the fall might help generate some serious investment. Her popularity in this country has remained high and she intends to address a joint session of Congress as well as groups of bankers and business executives. Having stuck his neck out for her, her friend George Shultz could not let her go home empty-handed.

One specific test Aquino may have faced by the time this is read will be a key indicator of her strength. When her investigating commissioners hand her reports recommending the prosecution of Enrile for human rights abuses and/or corruption, will she risk losing her moral authority by ignoring the reports or will she pursue them righteously, pushing Enrile to the wall?

Her naiveté and lack of experience hurt her but have also made her personally acceptable to more factions than any other leader in the Philippines today.

The ultimate irony may be that Aquino will survive for the same reasons Marcos did for so many years: Filipino patience and fear of the alternatives. □

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El Salvador Unions—The Real Story

David Jessup

J. Michael Luhan's description of the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) in El Salvador (*Dissent*, Summer 1986) is fundamentally distorted by the ideological, cold war lens through which he views events. He magnifies "facts" that support a preconceived thesis, while ignoring real events that lead to a different conclusion. The real story is that El Salvador's democratic trade union movement, despite fierce opposition from left and right extremes, has been largely successful in creating a democratic opening for working people.

Since space is limited, this reply will focus primarily on the issue of the Confederation of Democrática Workers (CTD). A lengthier account may be obtained from AIFLD, 1015 20th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

El Salvador's two major labor organizations, FESINCONSTRANS and the Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS), persuaded three smaller organizations to form the Unidad Popular Democrática (UPD) in 1980. In normal times, the three smaller groups would have had little reason to form such a coalition. One of them, ACOPAI, had earlier split from the UCS. Another, the CTS, led by Miguel Angel Vasquez, was affiliated internationally with the Christian World Confederation of Labor, a rival of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), with which FESINCONSTRANS was affiliated. The third group, ANIS, was an Indian association that might only generously be called a union.

The times, however, were not normal, and the UPD was born, a coalition for survival. The unions even managed to bring about several historic changes: land reform, the first free election in Salvadoran history, and the election of José Napoleón Duarte as president. The unions also helped persuade Congress to condition U.S. military aid on human rights improvements, an essential lever for reducing death squad activity. (To his credit, Luhan acknowledges AIFLD's role in changing U.S. policy, a fact often buried by those who seek to portray AIFLD as a tool of the U.S. State Department.)

Nevertheless, problems were apparent. The UPD was not a true labor federation. It was a loose coalition that was supposed to operate by consensus, largely out of deference to the smaller organizations within it. It had no constitution, no regular meetings, no dues structure, no defined set of officers. The position of chairman—an honor made dubious by the concomitant possibility of assassination—was rotated on a monthly basis. Most UPD activities were carried out by its separate, and still fractious, components.

In early 1984, when the election of Duarte seemed possible and the opening of a new, democratic period in Salvadoran history probable, the leaders of the two large federations, UCS and FESINCONSTRANS, initiated discussions about the formation of a true union confederation. It came to be called the Confederation of Democratic Workers (CTD), and was to replace FESINCONSTRANS as the sole Salvadoran affiliate of the ICFTU. Most important, the new organization was to have a per capita dues structure as a way of reducing excessive reliance on foreign donations. (It is ludicrous to claim that the UPD unions had been "weaned away" from reliance on their own internal dues structures in favor of "hand-outs" from AIFLD. AIFLD has always preached: dues, dues, dues. Ironically, the UPD dissidents who complained the loudest about their lack of independence were the ones who most strongly resisted the kind of a dues structure that would increase their independence.)

It was hoped the UPD would continue as a vehicle for cooperative action with other democratic non-ICFTU-affiliated unions, especially on political action. Similar coalitions, known as "united labor committees," exist between many U.S. state AFL-CIO labor federations and non-AFL-CIO unions.

Leaders of the smaller UPD unions, however,

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saw the new confederation as a threat to their influence. Unless it renounced its affiliation with the Christian labor international, Vasquez's CTS would not even be eligible to join the CTD. Furthermore, the voting strength of ACOPAI and ANIS would be reduced in proportion to their size.

THREE MONTHS after Duarte's election, on August 30, 1984, the leaders of the smaller UPD unions called a press conference—in the name of the UPD—to denounce President Duarte. The largest UPD organizations were not consulted about the press conference. Understandably, they were not pleased. A similar reaction might be imagined if several U.S. unions were to issue a statement in the name of the AFL-CIO, criticizing a public official newly elected with labor support, without bothering to notify AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland. Unfortunately, some U.S. reporters, including Luhan, persist in bestowing the UPD title on what has always been a minority faction.

Both the UCS and FESINCONSTRANS wrote letters disavowing the press communiqué. What bothered them was not the statement favoring dialogue with the guerrillas. Such a position had long been advocated by their own unions. (The AFL-CIO, as well, has always supported government dialogue with the opposition as the most promising solution to the wars in both El Salvador and Nicaragua). The real point of controversy was a situation in which several individuals could meet in a back room, draft a statement, secure the signatures of minor officials in other unions, and make it look as though they were speaking for the entire membership of the UPD.

The dissidents' motives in calling the press conference cannot be known for certain. Some may have been genuinely frustrated with the pace of change, even though Duarte had been in office only three months. Others may have held grudges against their more powerful colleagues. Some may have believed that the press conference might increase their influence and visibility.

We know in hindsight that several dissidents were secretly collaborating with the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas to disrupt the UPD, destroy the basis of the Social Pact, embarrass Duarte, and push for negotiations on terms favorable to the guerrillas. Details of this relationship are contained in documents captured from a guerrilla leader after an April 1985 shootout with government troops. According to the captured documents, three union leaders, code-named the "cocos," expected to receive financial assistance from the guerrillas in return for their cooperation. The documents specifically mention the controversial August press conference, the cooperation of ANIS, and the danger, from the guerrilla viewpoint, of the new democratic labor federation. (AIFLD recently released a translation of those portions of the documents relating to guerrilla work in the labor sector.)

Luhan tries to portray the formation of the CTD as a retaliatory response to the press conference, in spite of the fact that the chronology, and probably the causality as well, were the reverse. The press conference, however, did spur a series of meetings to plan the new confederation. The first was called by FESINCONSTRANS and UCS in early November 1984. It involved 120 union leaders representing twenty different unions or federations, including ACOPAI and ANIS. After three hours of discussion, a nine-member committee was elected to prepare the draft statutes for the proposed confederation.

The main sticking point was the question of dues. The concept was alien to ACOPAI and ANIS. As in all trade union organizations, dues would be the basis for proportional representation at congresses and on the executive board.

Largely to accommodate ACOPAI and ANIS, the organizing committee decided that whereas future congresses were to be based on proportional representation by size, the founding congress would allow each organization an equal number of delegates. The equal size provision was an important factor in allowing Esquino of ANIS to win the office of treasurer. It is absurd for Luhan to accuse AIFLD of having "given" the smaller unions the same vote as the larger ones. Why would AIFLD, even if it had the power to dictate the terms of the founding congress, impose a provision that would guarantee the election of its harshest critic? Equally absurd is the claim that the equal vote provision was an attempt to move the new federation to the right. Several of the new organizations, such as the postal workers, were considered even by the UPD dissidents to be left of the older unions.

The organizing committee of nine voted to hold the founding congress of the CTD on December 12, 1984. Contrary to Luhan's assertion, the congress was not masterminded by AIFLD as a surprise event. Nothing was "wired" in advance. The elections were completely wide open. AIFLD director Packer did not impose a slate of officers. It is true that FESINCONSTRANS and UCS brought in many spectators to cheer the process, but the voting was democratic, in accordance with the rules established by the committee, and hotly contested. Leaders of ACOPAI and ANIS participated actively and fought for every position.

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Neither co-chair abandoned the hall, "leaving Packer to swear in the new officers," as claimed by Luhan. A representative of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), the ICFTU regional body, had originally been invited to administer the oath of office, in accordance with custom. When the ORIT representative could not attend due to airline schedules at the time, the newly elected executive board asked the AIFLD director to assume this role.

It is not true that subsequent to the congress, AIFLD forced the CTD member organizations to pay dues to AIFLD and bypass treasurer-elect Esquino. As the first organization to pay dues (in late December), the UCS asked AIFLD to hold its funds in a safe until a new CTD bank account could be established. FESINCONSTRANS did the same. Even ANIS availed itself of this convenience. During this period, the new CTD president, Salvador Carazo, tried several times to arrange an appointment with Esquino to set up a bank account. Eventually, Carazo withdrew all the funds from the AIFLD safe and established a CTD bank account, leaving a blank space in the paperwork for Esquino to come in and sign at his convenience. It never happened, apparently because ANIS was having second thoughts about maintaining its membership in the CTD.

Nor is it true, as charged by Luhan, that AIFLD cut the ANIS budget by 25 percent "when Esquino Lisco defied [AIFLD director] Packer's wishes and ran for president of the CTD." AIFLD did reduce its assistance to *all* organizations by 25 percent, due to budget cutbacks. But the cuts came in June 1984, long before the flap over the press conference or the founding congress of the CTD.

AIFLD, at the request of the elected leadership of the new CTD, did begin to channel its assistance through the new ICFTU affiliate, as is customary in other countries in which AIFLD is active. Director Packer also adopted stricter accounting practices, which irritated some union leaders. At no time, however, did Packer threaten to reduce assistance to organizations reluctant to join the CTD, even when some of their leaders began to attack their colleagues—and AIFLD—publicly.

The situation might have soon returned to normal had not major conflicts also erupted in the two large union federations, UCS and FESINCONSTRANS, in January of 1985. These conflicts had little to do with the "guerrilla dialogue" section of the Social Pact so lovingly highlighted by the U.S. left. The problem was the section giving government jobs to labor leaders. AIFLD would have preferred that government appointments go to persons sympathetic to labor, but not labor leaders. The reason: control of government patronage by several union leaders might lead to power struggles within the unions.

In the case of the UCS, a challenger named Ramón Mendoza tried, and ultimately failed, to win control. Mendoza currently represents a tiny union made up of his loyal followers, and continues to use his UPD title in public activities, in spite of the fact that the UPD has disbanded.

In the case of FESINCONSTRANS, the dissidents won. AIFLD has continued its assistance to FESINCONSTRANS, just as it did when a challenger had won an election several years earlier. Despite efforts by the UPD dissidents to lure the new leadership away from the CTD, FESINCONSTRANS has continued its involvement in building the CTD.

LUHAN'S FABLE becomes increasingly imaginative when he tries to establish AIFLD's "real motives" during this period: moving the unions to "the right." He lifts two statements out of context from newspaper stories, one quoting AIFLD Information Director Jack Heberle to the effect that "one could say that by pressuring for negotiations, they [the UPD] were pushing Duarte to the left." Luhan does not share with *Dissent*'s readers another Heberle quote from the same article: "What's happening is that people on the outs are trying to come in. It's a turf battle." The first quote was prompted by the reporter. The second represents Heberle's actual views, which he has repeated in several publicly available letters and statements.

Upon this slender reed Luhan attempts to erect the myth of the Right-Wing Plot. He claims that an individual named Hugo Barrera received promises of AIFLD support for starting a new right-wing political party, Patria Libre. His only evidence for this claim are statements by Barrera himself and rumors circulated by UPD dissidents, who were at the same time circulating contradictory rumors to nervous Christian Democrats that AIFLD was plotting to start a new social democratic party. Neither rumor was true.

AIFLD's Jack Heberle did once agree to meet with Hugo Barrera in Washington. Part of Heberle's job as AIFLD information director is to meet with Latin leaders from across the political spectrum, when they request such meetings during their Washington trips. It is not surprising that Barrera might have made false claims about his "relationship" to AIFLD and other U.S. groups in order to promote his new party. What is surprising is that any journalist with a claim to seriousness

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would give credence to his claims without supporting evidence.

Equally spurious is the claim that AIFLD sought to link labor with landowners and "privatize" the agrarian cooperatives. If the UCS believed in privatizing coops, AIFLD would have pressed for this solution in the first place.

At no time did either AIFLD or Salvadoran union leaders contemplate any major changes in the agrarian reform. The problem was always how to move ahead with the implementation of the reforms as originally designed. The major stumbling block at the time was the Helms Amendment to the Foreign Aid act which prohibited the use of U.S. funds to compensate expropriated landowners. Without such compensation, campesinos could not obtain title to the land they occupied.

FAR FROM ATTEMPTING to establish an alliance with conservative forces, the union leaders who created the CTD were interested in building a powerful authentic confederation, which, while supporting Duarte's democratic opening, would stand independent of any political party and seek gains for the workers in the economic sphere. This they have done. The CTD recently linked up with another Christian-affiliated union to form a new umbrella coalition called the National Union of Workers and Peasants (UNOC). On March 15, 1986, UNOC organized a rally of 65,000 workers, the largest in recent history, to support "reforms, peace, and democracy." After a five-hour meeting with Duarte on the day following the march, the democratic union leaders announced several changes in the government's economic package that were favorable to workers.

Meanwhile, the UPD has disintegrated. All five of its founding organizations have withdrawn. It continues to exist as a paper organization run by a handful of self-appointed leaders, many of whom lost elections in their own unions.

In February 1986, several Communist-run labor unions persuaded the remnants of the UPD to join a new coalition using the acronym of UNTS. This led to reports in some U.S. newspapers that the democratic unions had abandoned Duarte. In reality, the democratic unions have stuck with Duarte's democratic opening and abandoned the UPD.

After staging a rally of 12,000 supporters in February, the UNTS alliance has increasingly unraveled. UNTS spokesman Esquino was ousted from ANIS, which has rejoined the democratic unions in UNOC. Both ACOPAI and Miguel Vasquez's CTS have announced their withdrawal from UNTS.

Even more damaging to the credibility of UNTS was the praise it received from right-wing ARENA party leader Roberto D'Aubuisson during a March television harangue attacking Duarte. Unfortunately, no U.S. journalists reported on D'Aubuisson's speech. Democratic union leaders had to write a letter to the *Washington Post* to get their point of view across:

> North Americans may think it is strange that the far right and the far left are allies against the Duarte government and the democratic trade unions in El Salvador. But to us, it is an old story. Both extremes know that if democracy wins in El Salvador, they lose. With enemies like that we know we must be doing something right.

It might be added that with critics like Luhan, AIFLD knows it must be doing something right.□

J. Michael Luhan Replies

I would like to boil down David Jessup's account and fill in a few blanks:

According to him, the UPD should be credited with a few modest achievements ("... land reform, the first free elections in Salvadoran history and the election of Duarte as president..."). At the same time, however, disorganization and factionalism were so rampant in the UPD that following immediately upon the last of these modest achievements it needed to be replaced altogether by a new labor front, the CTD, lest the mediocrity continue. The fact that creating such a new front would let President Duarte off the hook from the Social Pact his party had signed with the UPD to pursue dialogue with the left was of no consequence. Nor were the dual admissions that AIFLD

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spokesman Jack Heberle made to the press that pressuring Duarte on dialogue was tantamount to leftist provocation—his words were twisted by ideological reporters in the service of the *Miami Herald* and *Los Angeles Times*. AIFLD really supports "the guerrilla dialogue section of the Social Pact so lovingly highlighted by the U.S. left," as one can sense from Jessup's use of language.

One of the primary improvements to be made by the new CTD was in financial accountability. Whether AIFLD's favored son, CTD President Salvador Carazo, blabbed to reporters about a $160,000 campaign offer that AIFLD made to him, at the same time that U.S. Ambassador Pickering and AIFLD's paymaster, The Agency for International Development (AID), were both professing to know nothing about it, could not be commented upon. But it did take some time to work the bugs out of the new accounting system. Ambassador Pickering's request shortly thereafter for AIFLD director Packer's removal from El Salvador, as alleged by two senior embassy officials, likewise was not worthy of comment. Jessup was too absorbed in describing the fine details of the fancy new accounting procedures.

MEANWHILE, A TINY GROUP of selfish, resentful, and conniving UPD dissidents was busy doing everything possible to slow the CTD's inexorable march toward democratic unionism. One tactic was to appeal elections in their own unions won by their pro-CTD opponents. Sometimes they even persuaded the government to cooperate, as when Salvadoran Labor Minister Julio Samayoa declared Carazo's election void upon determining he had trucked in loads of nonmembers to vote for him. This cost Carazo his base for the presidency of the CTD, but another prime AIFLD protege, Samuel Maldonado, quickly stepped in to carry the torch forward. Note: Not mentioned in Luhan's original article were the circumstances of Carazo's departure from office. Before surrendering his headquarters at the SUTC and FESINCONSTRANS, Carazo took with him as severance pay everything that wasn't nailed down—tables, chairs, typewriters, etc.—and stowed them safely in the CTD offices. AIFLD Deputy Director Donald Kessler then told Carazo's victorious UPD opponent that it was all AIFLD property that was being repossessed, a rather curious attitude since Jessup pointed out that FESINCONSTRANS was an official member of the ICTFU and hence a blood brother of the AFL-CIO. A poor way to treat relatives, Mr. Kessler.)

The UPD conspirators wasted no time in subverting Maldonado, the new CTD president. One of their allies, the union of the National Agrarian Reform Institute (ISTA), penned a letter to President Duarte in June 1985 charging Maldonado, the ISTA director, with misdirecting AID funds to several new CTD organizations, a charge corroborated by an AID official to the *Boston Globe* August 19, 1985). President Duarte was apparently taken in by this ruse and fired Maldonado in July. This was OK, however, because it freed him to concentrate all of his efforts on building CTD democratic unionism.

IN A LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT to derail the CTD juggernaut, the UPD then hired the services of one J. Michael Luhan to concoct the fable of the Right-Wing Plot. (Luhan's actual words were "conservative alliance," mere tools to tone down his ideological extremism.) Forget about the meetings that U.S. Embassy personnel described as having taken place between AIFLD union loyalists like Maldonado and Salvadoran agricultural bigwigs (and thugs) like Alfonso Salaverria to discuss joint management of UPD reform sector cooperatives with their former owners, meetings that Maldonado himself described at length to the *Boston Globe* August 19, 1985. Forget about Salaverria's subsequent cooperation with former ARENA vice-president Hugo Barrera in forming the Patria Libre party, which only coincidentally posited the same reform-of-the-reforms idea. Forget about Barrera's statements to the press about his wonderful relations with the CTD—that was a Slender Reed that UPD dissidents used to whip up wild rumors about Right-Wing Plots.

SO THERE IT IS, another AIFLD success story. The fact that people like Luhan (and the U.S. Embassy, the Christian Democrats, Salvadoran businessmen, and various U.S. newsmen) have criticized AIFLD for numbskullery only shows that it must be doing something right (something right for *whom* is a question we haven't space to deal with). But Maldonado summarized to the *Boston Globe* the kind of independent unionism that AIFLD is so successfully inculcating in El Salvador. When asked to explain why the UPD dissidents had gotten into so much trouble with AIFLD, he replied: "If you're going to argue with the cook, you can't expect to eat" (Boston Globe, August 19, 1985). Bravo, Mr. Maldonado, well said. □

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Robert Heilbroner

Of Power and Freedom

DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALISM: PROPERTY, COMMUNITY, AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MODERN SOCIAL THOUGHT, by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. New York: Basic Books. 234 pages. $15.95.

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, both professors of economics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, are scholars writing from the perspective of what might be called "liberated Marxism," a perspective that begins from Marx's penetrating analysis of capitalism, but that discards many elements of that analysis formerly regarded as sacrosanct, such as the labor theory of value or the base-superstructure conception of the architecture of historical formations. Their new book, *Democracy and Capitalism*, is a critique of conventional political and economic ideology—not ideology in the sense of a tissue of ideas deliberately designed to deceive the public, but ideas to which the dominant class itself repairs in search of the truth. Central to this ideology are such deeply held beliefs as the natural complementarity of democracy and capitalism, the necessary and salutary separation of "economics" and "politics," and the exercise of "choice" as the decisive contribution of the individual within democratic capitalism. The purpose of Bowles and Gintis's work is to educate us with respect to the frail premises on which this conventional defense of contemporary democratic capitalist society is based. This purpose should be of special interest to readers of *Dissent* who will not need to be convinced by the moral thrust of the authors' critique, but who, like myself, will benefit from a brilliant clarification of ideas in whose thrall all of us find ourselves to some degree.

Democracy and Capitalism is complexly and tightly argued, but it is organized around a simple enough central theme. This is the tension between the two structures that constitute the double helix of modern democratic capitalist society. One is the logic of the expansion of capital—the internally generated dynamic by which the capitalist system reproduces and extends its web of authority over the organization of production. The other is the logic of the expansion of rights—those specific aspects of power or domination that have been wrested from their existing possessors and made part of the "power" of individuals over themselves.

Bowles and Gintis describe a series of "accommodations" by which these conflicting thrusts have been successively contained—the Lockean accommodation that reconciled representative government with capitalism by denying the franchise to the working class; the Jeffersonian accommodation that sought to avoid the clash through the democratization of access to property; the Madisonian accommodation that relied on mutual conflict of interest groups to dilute the force of democratic power; and in our own time, the Keynesian accommodation that avoided a confrontation of logics through the annealing effects of economic growth coupled with the welfare state. Each of these accommodations worked for a time, but each eventually lost its absorptive capacity—the Lockean accommodation by the slow but irrepressible rise of universal suffrage; the Jeffersonian by the relentless extension of capitalist relations of production; the Madisonian by the replacement of a diversified, petty-bourgeois social fabric with a heavily industrialized, increasingly homogenized class structure; the Keynesian by a shift from growth to inflation, a decline in productivity, and an internationalization of capital.

Ahead the authors see three main lines of possible movement. Two of these rescue the preroga-

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tives of capital from the pressures of expanding democratic rights—one by pursuing the policies of "global liberalism," in which the expansion of capital escapes the constraints of democratic rights through the extraordinary possibilities for international movement; the other by turning to a "neo-Hobbesian liberalism" that blunts the force of the democratic logic through strengthened hierarchies and bureaucracies of economic or social organization. The third possibility is called "postliberal democracy." It advocates a wide range of changes aimed at assuring the ascendancy of the logic of rights over that of capital. The authors wisely eschew detailed programs or utopian blueprints, but the general nature of postliberal democracy emerges from their previous critical analysis: humanization of the scale of political and economic life; emphasis on participation in both political and economic activity; a pervading concern with the internal developmental significance of human actions, not merely with their external consequences.

In this radical analysis of accommodations and resolutions, the conventional vocabulary of "socialism" plays little or no role. This is because Bowles and Gintis pursue a line of analysis one of whose distinctive aspects is its emphasis on the variety of the forms of domination. This provides the basis for a wide-ranging discussion of the forms of power. For example, the authors dissect the popular liberal contention that the competitive capitalist economy effectively dissipates and dissolves power through the workings of the marketplace—a contention that fails to perceive economic power in the crucial ability of capital to go on "strike" or the social relations of sub- and superordination within a firm. In similar fashion, they recognize the failure of traditional Marxian analysis to recognize the independent existence of political or patriarchal domination as manifestations of power quite outside the realm of economic or class interests. In their view, these and still other forms of power all constitute loci in which the struggle for personal emancipation and development takes place, and for which the institutions of a postliberal democracy must make room.

Inevitably, not all aspects of this powerful book strike me as equally convincing. I note an almost complete disregard of the structural conditions for, or limitations of, "democracy," that term on which so much depends. The psychological underpinnings of social stratification are ignored, with the consequence of understating the obduracy of relations of domination in whatever field. Their use of the analogy of a "game" to describe the constraints and forces of social relations is very much in the modern temper, but (as with most analysis in that vein) trivializes the groaning and painful processes that it seeks to illumine. I add these cautionary words to add some balance to an appraisal that might otherwise lose its force by an absence of any sense of critical perspective. This is a remarkable and important book, the best analysis of the contradictions of modern social thought that I have read. □

Jeffrey Scheuer

On Moral Thinking

TELLING RIGHT FROM WRONG: WHAT IS MORAL, WHAT IS IMMORAL, AND WHAT IS NEITHER ONE NOR THE OTHER, by Timothy J. Cooney. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books. 158 pp. $18.95.

We live in an interesting age in the history of ethics. Over the past century, philosophers have posited a variety of conceptual frameworks for moral thinking, including utilitarianism, intuitionism, and emotivism. Each of these metaethical theories has captured some important aspect of the moral enterprise. As Timothy J. Cooney writes, "everyone . . . had a piece of the answer." Nevertheless, these theories have all proven inadequate or incomplete as foundations for morality. In keeping with much of classical philosophy from Plato onward, they shed useful and often brilliant light, but do not answer all of the questions they lead us to discern.

With *Telling Right from Wrong*, Cooney joins this eminent tradition. And like many of those who have sought to describe the moral elephant in its true dimensions, his report is highly compelling in certain respects, but downright implausible in others. Cooney boldly claims that we can put all of these disputes behind us. His provocative thesis is that the basis of morality is a single universally shared desire: the desire that life—social, if not biological—not be destroyed. All else is mere opinion.

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Like many contemporary theorists, Cooney begins by examining moral language. Genuine imperatives, he argues, are "hybrid statements": propositions that combine, in highly elliptical form, a factual or conditional assertion that is demonstrably true, and a widely shared opinion or desire. Neither of these is explicitly stated in the hybrid itself, which is a kind of shorthand—like a joke, but not funny. Implicit in it is an extensive background argument, the notational form of which might be: given a wide desire for x, and a set of factual conditions y, the proper course of action is z. Thus, in Cooney's example, if an embezzler named Jones is being considered for a job as an accountant, "Jones is the wrong man for the job" is a (prudential) hybrid statement.

Most hybrids, according to Cooney, are noncontroversial inductive statements about the probability of some pattern of events recurring in the future. (However, beware of false hybrids; the difference is to be found in the background argument.) Hybrids are inevitable: without them, groups and group decision-making would be impossible. Based on the joinder of commonly known facts or probabilities and shared values or beliefs, they tell us "how to satisfy our shared desires."

IF HYBRIDS ARE THE STUFF OF MORALITY, false hybrids are the scourge. The great error of previous ethical doctrines, Cooney contends, is the confusion of the two, and "the failure to recognize that two substantively different matters pass under the heading of morality." One is what he calls the primary code: a set of hybrid statements that is a common denominator of all moral systems, and includes elemental injunctions against murder, robbery, arson, assault, and other grave misdeeds; the other includes the various secondary codes that consist of mere opinion or custom.

There is more than a grain of truth in this account. It would seem hard to deny that hybrids, or something like them, do figure in imperative language. Similarly, Cooney's distinction between morality and opinion strikes a crucial nerve of moral debate. Much of what passes for morality is not the genuine article; even many Christian believers may doubt whether Holy Scripture, as interpreted by fundamentalist preachers, is the true moral code for all humankind. But Cooney is making a stronger and more dubious claim: that true morality, as revealed through hybrid statements, consists of nothing but the primary code, and has no other ultimate purpose than preventing the destruction of society.

The primary code is, in fact, a rough common denominator of moral systems and theories. As Cooney aptly notes, it is partly because each one generates the primary code that the various ethical doctrines of the past century have all enjoyed a certain cachet. Without these ultimate limitations on human conduct, civilized life, based upon interlocking and overlapping forms of community and autonomy, would yield to chaos. Cooney cites the Greenland Eskimos who allowed their members one free murder before punishment, and were on the verge of extinction before coming under Danish jurisdiction. Even genocidal groups such as the Nazis must observe the primary code internally in order to survive.

COONEY IS RAISING THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL ethical questions here in a direct and pointed way; he argues his case forcefully, and with a refreshing enthusiasm. But hairline fractures in the theory emerge along the way: when he concedes, for example, that a child's stealing a pencil is wrong, or that certain practices (such as bribery) do not directly violate the primary code, but interfere with its enforcement. I suspect that scores of other examples could be multiplied from these, of acts that are socially undesirable (such as pollution), unfair (such as exploitation), or indecent (lying, breaking promises, causing unnecessary pain, etc.), but that do not directly threaten the social organism as a whole. Society can absorb a lot of immorality before being destroyed, or even yielding to a new form of government.

The problem is not with Cooney's distinction between morality and opinion—one on which morality itself depends; it is how and where he draws it. Thus, what seem on the whole like sound metaethical positions staked out in the first half of the book lead to very questionable conclusions in the second, where secondary codes are examined. The most important and problematic conclusion is that, beyond the narrow confines of the primary code, anything goes—and likewise anything may be proscribed. There is no room for lesser moral injunctions, no margin of ambiguity surrounding the primary code itself. Proscriptions against gambling, abortion, and capital punishment are all false hybrids—opinions disguised as moral judgments—as are "statements concerning alcohol, homosexual acts, vivisection, interracial marriage, premarital sex, prostitution, number of wives, divorce, freedom of speech," and so forth. Unlike the primary-code acts, these "would not cause the destruction of the group if we allowed one person to do them freely or everyone to do them once."

This is true enough on its face; but Cooney's

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eventual claim turns the idea of moral neutrality inside out: "... a society that allows prostitution, homosexuality, abortion, premarital sex, gambling, pornography, alcohol, birth-control devices, and free expression is not morally superior to one that forbids all these acts...." Welcome to the moral Twilight Zone, where opinion reigns.

IT IS TOO BAD THAT COONEY didn't add a political chapter to this book; it might have provided a clearer target for both criticism and appreciation. As it is, despite the generally liberal and iconoclastic timbre, his very narrow view of the scope and function of morality initially suggests the libertarian conservatism of a latter-day Hobbes. Yet the blithe consignment of many urgent social questions to the realm of opinion seems less a normative position than one of perverse indifference. Those questions are hotly debated in our political culture. In Cooney's view, that is precisely the problem; secondary codes disguised as morality threaten to engulf us. However, his aggressive neutrality toward anything outside of the primary code invites absurdity—implying, for example, that there is no moral difference between capitalism and socialism, or between tolerance and oppression.

Telling Right from Wrong is full of acute observations and delightfully provocative, even outrageous, assertions. It seeks, for all the right reasons, to demolish a number of unsound moral constructs left behind by the system-building of the past century: relativism, utility, emotivism, intuitionism, and any sort of religious ethics. But Cooney's alternative, for all its shock value, ultimately lacks the theoretical depth and subtlety—what might be called the metaphysical commitment to the unobvious—that animates a radical or even a liberal worldview. The structure of morality is arguably more complicated, and its boundary with opinion more elusive, than the author supposes. There are degrees of moral certainty, and of moral gravity; subtle as well as palpable forms of moral injury; genuine moral disagreements among people who equally value the survival of society. Like earlier moral philosophers from Mill and G. E. Moore to A. J. Ayer and R. M. Hare, Cooney captures certain important functions and aspects of morality, but not all. His theory, like theirs, shows the fine line between insight and absurdity that makes abstract thinking such a splendid adventure.

UNFORTUNATELY, ANY DISCUSSION OF THIS WORTHY volume must also mention its ironic notoriety. In 1983 the author, an independent scholar whose background was in press relations, not philosophy, forged a letter of recommendation from an eminent philosopher. Random House dropped the book when the forgery was discovered; Prometheus Books brought it out last year. Cooney's behavior in this affair was reprehensible; but it would not, if generalized, destroy society, or even scholarly publishing. The protection of mutual expectations, of implicit rights and duties, simple fairness and truth—these are precious things, and while their violation does not summon the apocalypse, they are still what much of morality is about. Recounting the episode in an afterword, Cooney seems at best mildly contrite; one could almost infer that he would do it again. This does nothing to dispel the paradox, that an amateur philosopher could write a rewarding and useful book about "telling right from wrong," yet, in his eagerness to make his views known, be incapable of doing the right thing. □

Harold Meyerson

See Liberalism Shrink

CUTTING EDGES: MAKING SENSE OF THE 80'S, by Charles Krauthammer. New York: Random House. 221 pages. $17.95.

As Charles Krauthammer recounts in this collection of his essays, he came to the *New Republic* in the late 1970s because, "uniquely among intellectual organs, the *New Republic* was trying to rescue liberalism from its drift toward defeatist isolationism, and from its growing confusion as to American purpose." This was a mission on which Krauthammer quickly took the point, becoming the magazine's primary advocate for reviving the perspective of "liberal internationalism ... whose pedigree," he laments, "stretches from Harry Truman through Henry Jackson and, alas, no further."

Krauthammer has been at it for more than half a decade now, and the results are mixed. Though Democratic members of Congress flit back and forth on such questions as aid to the *contras*, the liberal and interventionist traditions remain more sundered than joined. Krauthammer has had his

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victories, but they are not the ones he initially sought. If Krauthammer's arguments and those of the *New Republic* have not yet made liberals more interventionist, nor interventionists more liberal (though Krauthammer contends this is in the works), they have at least helped make interventionists—well, more interventionist. Indeed, *Cutting Edges* reads like nothing so much as a journal of rectification for the Reagan administration.

Consider, for instance, Krauthammer's reaction to the president's 1985 State of the Union address, in which Reagan pledged to support the insurgents in both Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Krauthammer's chief concern is that Reagan has missed the point. The president has justified the interventions with references to the charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. This misunderstands the moral grandeur of the Reagan Doctrine, which derives its legitimacy (Krauthammer is compelled to remind the White House) neither from self-defense nor from international law but rather from the moral imperative of opposing communism. No scraps of paper for Krauthammer: "To be constrained from supporting freedom by an excessive concern for sovereignty . . . is neither especially moral nor prudent. The West, of late, has taken to hiding behind parchment barriers as an excuse for inaction when oppressed democrats beg for help. The Reagan Doctrine, while still hiding a bit, announces an end to inaction."

With the expressed intent, then, of mounting "a robust, self-confident defense of liberal values at home and abroad," Krauthammer instead has succeeded in bringing Ronald Reagan out of the closet. That he is somewhat wide of the mark can be explained at least in part by his selectivity in defending liberal values. Krauthammer is at his most robust defending liberty—insightfully on such questions as church-state relations, more problematically on a range of Third-World questions where "liberty" can become a banner beneath which a range of other values actually parade. His defense of other liberal values is decidedly more tepid. On equality, he's blind as a bat.

Krauthammer opposes, for instance, comparable worth as a bureaucratic intrusion on the workings of the market. How this differentiates comparable worth from such other assaults on the market's sovereignty as union contracts, the minimum wage, and the Davis-Bacon Act is not clear, except that these are all part of the established order, while comparable worth, being new and untried, smells suspiciously like a fad. Krauthammer is not an uncritical defender of the market. He notes that it destroys old industries and sectors and hence requires a safety net for its casualties, but his appreciation of the dynamics of the dual labor market is shaky at best. "Sex segregation is obviously unfair," he writes, "but it is hard to see how it causes downward pressure on women's wages when, at the same time, through the socially enforced exclusion of men, it shelters 'women's work' from a vast pool of competitors." This has it backwards, of course: sex segregation doesn't keep men from flooding into low-paying jobs; it keeps women from obtaining higher paying ones. One man's shelter is another woman's prison.

But then, concern over the economic polarization that is the hallmark of Ronald Reagan's America is strikingly absent from Krauthammer's Reagan-era essays. The Catholic bishops' letter on the economy annoys him. "To have rediscovered liberalism and rediscovered the poor is perhaps an achievement for any ecclesiastical hierarchy," he notes. "But it is no great contribution to American political discourse." The only victims of poverty to whom Krauthammer devotes an essay are the homeless, more particularly those who are homeless as a result of policies of deinstitutionalization, that is, through the misguided indulgence of liberals. Of those who are homeless as a consequence of deindustrialization, we hear little: that is simply how the economy works. For Krauthammer, the sin of the bishops is their belief that the elimination of poverty is a question of political will, a notion he contends was discredited by the failed experiments of the Great Society. At bottom, Krauthammer's defense of liberal economics is barely distinguishable from the neoconservatives' attack upon it.

KRAUTHAMMER'S CHIEF DOMESTIC CONCERN is the rise of political fringe groups, the Falwells and Freezeniks who bring into an imperfect world an absolutist politics. In domestic matters, Krauthammer has only one absolute, and that is the stability of national institutions. In the battles over prayer in public schools and Christmas crèches in the park, he sides not with the "ignorant armies of secularists and . . . sectarians," but with the American civil religion of the Founders and Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, which "for two centuries has supported and elevated the nation." He proposes to mediate the fight between Governor Mario Cuomo and Archbishop John O'Connor through an appeal to civil peace that has a higher claim, he contends, on the allegiance of the Catholic faithful than even the Church's teachings on abortion—for the alternative to civil peace is revolutionary upheaval. In these essays, in his fear of

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experimentation and zeal, in his embrace of the institutional legacies of the past and his disdain for the claims of movements present, Krauthammer emerges as the nearest thing we have to a Burkean neoconservative.

But Krauthammer's battle to reestablish the center hinges less on his defense of the status quo in both domestic affairs and superpower relations (he supports deterrence) and more on his support for liberal internationalism and Third-World counterrevolution. Krauthammer has fought this battle on at least two fronts. The first of these has been his fight for a single global standard by which we judge governments, in contradistinction to the authoritarian/totalitarian distinction of the Jeane Kirkpatricks and in opposition to the neorealist heirs of Hans Morgenthau who would substitute for American values and ideology the even more nebulous criteria of national interest.

On his other flank, Krauthammer combats the liberals and the left, who share his adherence to a single standard in judging governments, but who are picky to the point of paralysis about the manner of American intervention. "Left isolationism is the isolationism of means," Krauthammer writes. "And the modern Democratic party is its home." This leaves liberals, Krauthammer laments, supporting a *de facto* double standard: favoring those interventions that take the form of withholding support from our right-wing allies; opposing those interventions that take the form of sending weapons to anticommunists in the field. You were there in Manila, says Krauthammer; you should be in Managua as well.

These politics of "democratic militance" echo the right-wing social democrats' support for the Vietnam War and repeat their mistakes. Now as then, the problem is not with the single standard, of course, but with the nature of our standard bearers and the means by which they cling or come to power. Krauthammer does not believe the ends justify the means we employ to wage Third-World counterrevolution, but neither does he subject those means to a particularly penetrating examination. Krauthammer's *contras* assume a more popular democratic character than either the composition of their leadership, their conduct in the field, or their level of popular support would lead one to conclude. As to the legacy of past United States interventions in Nicaragua and the difficulties that would place before any genuinely nationalistic third force allied with us, Krauthammer is singularly silent. Professions of intent matter greatly with Krauthammer: the *contras* and the United States stand for liberty—so it is liberty that our intervention brings to Nicaragua.

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THE CRISIS OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM arises first from the dearth of liberals who stand by us in the developing world—so that the Krauthammers must convert Somocistas and Jonas Savimbis into something other than what they are—and from the destructive effect that prolonged civil war has on the prospects for a liberal resolution. Ultimately, liberal internationalism cannot sustain the kind of radical dissociation of ends and means that characteristically accompanies America's forays into the Third World. The doctrine died in Vietnam the day the American officer remarked over television that it was necessary to destroy the village in order to save it. American liberals were and remain too resolutely undialectical to appreciate that remark without irony.

If the center cannot be reconstructed by returning liberals to interventionism, can it be brought back by converting—surely "returning" is not the right word—interventionists to liberalism? In an unsigned editorial in this year's April 7 issue of the *New Republic,* which any reader of *Cutting Edges* will recognize as Krauthammer's, the *New Republic* proclaims the Philippine Corollary to the Reagan Doctrine. Krauthammer's Reagan is now pledged to oppose tyrannies both left and right, to counter authoritarians with a "third force strategy" wherever possible. So liberal internationalism may yet revive after all, though it requires the transformation not merely of *contras* into freedom fighters but of the Reagan administration into a nest of liberals.

But enough of the Reagan Doctrine. What of the Krauthammer Doctrine? It is a defense of liberalism that is conservative at home, fearful of popular movements, opposed to the expansion of the public sphere in economics, and profoundly self-subverting in its defense of liberalism abroad.

A few more such defenses and liberalism may as well close up shop. □

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John Patrick Diggins

Grace and Grief

REINHOLD NIEBUHR: A BIOGRAPHY, by Richard Wightman Fox. New York: Pantheon. 340 pp. $19.95.

Writers on the left have generally looked upon religion from two opposing perspectives. Beginning in the nineteenth century socialists influenced by Marx's writings tended to regard religion as a species of "false consciousness" that must be extirpated before the working class could become fully aware of its true mission. More recently, in the writings of such Marxist historians as E. P. Thompson and the late Herbert Gutman, religion has come to be appreciated as a cultural and spiritual resource that has enabled workers to resist capitalist ideology and to promote the communal values of a "moral economy" based upon provision rather than profit. Yet there remains a third perspective on religion that the socialist tradition has scarcely considered, a perspective that goes to the heart of the "human condition" by putting our problematic and paradoxical human nature, and not only "the system" of social institutions, at the center of modern political thought. This is the radical perspective of Reinhold Niebuhr, radical in the sense of going to the root of things and bringing forth a truer account of the reasons for each individual's fate as an alienated being—original sin.

Although many writers would not want to acknowledge it, Niebuhr's legacy remains an embarrassment to almost every position on the political spectrum. The radical left has assumed that the solution to the problem of oppression and exploitation begins with the abolition of private property. The liberal-pragmatic tradition tries to solve the same problem with the empirical techniques of "intelligent planning" and "social control." And, in contrast, the American conservative tradition, especially its present neoconservative wing, insists that the free market will automatically bring about the good society to the extent that political authority yields to economic forces. To Niebuhr all such stances are acts of pride that would have us believe power and self-interest can be eliminated from human affairs with proper structural rearrangements. Hence for the Marxist private property is the instrument of oppression, for the neoconservative the source of liberty.

To Niebuhr, who perceives a deep ambiguity in all institutions as well as actions, property can represent power as well as freedom, and to the extent that man's sinful nature leads him to abuse both qualities, property must always be subject to constant surveillance and, if necessary, public control. The control of power, it should be remembered, was one of the great aims of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. But Niebuhr revises that heritage by showing that democracy is necessary not because of human reason and goodness but rather because man's disposition to exploit his fellow man remains constant at every stage of history. Thus Niebuhr's treatise *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* was addressed to Adam Smith as well as Marx, both of whom saw, albeit for different reasons, government thwarting human development rather than restraining the evil tendencies that characterize humankind's fallen condition. "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

RICHARD FOX'S RECENT BIOGRAPHY OF NIEBUHR is a prodigious feat of research and analysis. He is fully sympathetic toward Niebuhr as a man of greatness and humility, yet somewhat critical of the unstinting pessimism characteristic of Niebuhr's political thought. Fox's stance is judicious and his criticisms thoughtful and measured. It may be that Niebuhr's pessimism serves as a caution against the disillusionment that infects the activist who starts out by believing that ideals can be fulfilled rather than approximated. On the contrary, Niebuhr warns that man's dual nature, his moral obligation to struggle against oppression and his existential awareness that absolute justice cannot be realized, requires him "to seek after an impossible victory and to adjust himself to an inevitable defeat."

Reinhold Niebuhr was born in Wright City, Missouri, in 1892, the son of a German immigrant father who was a rural Protestant minister. The father, Gustav, showed little interest in the Social Gospel movement of the Progressive era, and when Reinhold enrolled in the Eden Seminary at Elmira College, Illinois, he spent much of his school time breaking away from his family's German language and mastering English. By the time he entered Yale Divinity School he was convinced that religion must be grounded not in supernatural revelation but in human needs and experience. Yet, like William James, he was aware of Pascal's dictum

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that genuine religion always meant a struggle between belief and unbelief, and this capacity to doubt the illusions of certainty would remain with him in his political life as well as religious vocation.

Niebuhr's first important turn to politics came with the outbreak of World War I. In an interesting anticipation of Hannah Arendt's later thesis, in 1916 Niebuhr wrote an essay on "The Paradox of Patriotism," pointing out that the modern state had dissolved traditional loyalties to religion, region, and class as nationalism demanded the undivided allegiance of its subjects. Yet with America's entry into the war, Niebuhr himself participated in the campaign against antiwar "disloyalty" and even his characteristic skepticism toward all forms of idealism succumbed to Woodrow Wilson's evangelical rhetoric. Then the Paris Peace Conference left him utterly disillusioned with liberalism and its promise "to save the world." But in the early 1920s, when many American intellectuals bid farewell to politics, Niebuhr was rapidly radicalized as he discovered the brutal social realities of industrial society when serving as a pastor in Detroit and observing the plight of the autoworkers. In a decade when the capitalist class claimed Jesus as the first business executive and organization man (Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, 1925) and Henry Ford became the nation's hero, Niebuhr wrote blistering articles in the *Christian Century* on the pretensions of America's piety and its culture of consumption. In 1928 he supported Norman Thomas for president and before the Depression he had committed himself to the Socialist cause. But in the early 1930s he came to believe that both liberalism and socialism, both the philosopher John Dewey and the former minister Thomas, failed to appreciate the necessity of force and power in the quest for justice, the sense of "struggle" possessed by the Communists. Niebuhr never considered turning to the Communist party, but the warning first spelled out in 1934 in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*—that the sensitive intellectual would shun the use of force and violence to achieve political ends—seemed fully confirmed by the end of the decade when liberal and socialist pacifists had no answer to Hitler and the menace of Nazism. To the noninterventionist radicals who claimed that modern warfare would erase the distinction between liberalism and fascism, Niebuhr lashed out: "The Socialists have a dogma that this war is a clash of rival imperialisms. Of course they are right. So is a clash between myself and a gangster. . . ."

DURING THE WAR YEARS NIEBUHR WROTE one of his most important books, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, a two-volume seminal study that brought the history of Christian philosophy to bear on such issues as love and justice and the individual and community. He also wrote for the American Palestine Committee, defending as a Protestant Zionist the right of Jewish nationhood, a defense greatly appreciated by such British writers as Isaiah Berlin and R. H. S. Crossman. At the war's end there emerged another problem that no one had foreseen in its full dimensions except the small group of American Trotskyists—the problem of Stalinism.

Although Niebuhr recognized that Russia may have had legitimate security reasons for controlling Eastern Europe, he strongly disagreed with Henry Wallace that the Soviets could be conciliated by good faith alone. In contact with European social democrats who feared Soviet expansion, he defended the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, and in 1948 he was featured on the cover of *Time*'s 25th anniversary issue as the crisis theologian for the cold war. Like George Kennan, however, Niebuhr was less convinced of the wisdom of extending the cold war to Asia; and when he advocated abandoning Chiang Kai-shek during the Korean stalemate, the FBI began to keep a file on him—always a good sign. In one of his most provocative books, *The Irony of American History* (1952), he castigated both communism and liberalism for assuming that their respective ideologies were innocent of power and bore no responsibility for the terrifying realities of the atomic age.

A Stevensonian liberal in the 1950s, Niebuhr became a reluctant supporter of JFK in the early 1960s. Because of a stroke, his writing declined in output and originality during the turbulent decade. He championed the civil rights movement, applauded Pope John's encyclicals on peace and social justice, and preferred the risk of nuclear disarmament to the heightening "game of deterrence." President Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War drove him to despair. "For the first time I fear I am ashamed of our beloved country."

Fox's final chapter describing Niebuhr's last days, his death on June 1, 1971, and funeral is poignant, elegiac, a fitting spiritual epiphany for one of the most influential thinkers in modern American intellectual history. Perhaps Fox's excellent biography will help his generation of the 1960s come to appreciate the moral qualities he so admires in Niebuhr: a sustained assault on complacency and righteousness, a skepticism of all ideologies that claim a superior virtue free of the temptations of power, a tragic sense of life that leads not to resignation but a renewed quest for justice. □

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David Bensman

Ways for Democrats

THE ZERO-SUM SOLUTION, by Lester Thurow. New York: Simon and Schuster. 414 pp. $18.95.

Lester Thurow's *The Zero-Sum Society* (Basic Books, 1982) provoked a storm of protest from liberals and leftists who charged that Thurow's emphasis on the need for economic growth represented an abandonment of concern for working people and the poor. Apparently Thurow listened to his critics, for his new book, *The Zero-Sum Solution*, demonstrates conclusively that liberalism can produce innovative and comprehensive proposals for economic growth *with social justice*.

Thurow's program aims to produce a better coordination of America's social institutions. His proposals include substantial tax reform to channel investment into productivity enhancement; reducing corporate emphasis on short-term profit; boosting public and private investment and saving; federal support of industrial research and development; public investment banking to fund new industries and restructure sick ones; increased funding for better public schools; social planning through industrial policy-making; overhauling the bank regulatory system; worker participation in corporate decision-making; international coordination of exchange rates; reform of trade laws and of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; and defusing the Latin American debt bomb.

These proposals are not simply the usual list of do-good items. For instance, Thurow proposes federal funding for on-the-job training for people who don't go to college. He would have the federal government issue vouchers that would enable the "non-college bound" to pay tuition to approved employer training programs not only when they are young, but throughout their working lifetimes.

I HAVE THREE RESERVATIONS about Thurow's analysis. The first is short-term, but of political importance. History has made Ronald Reagan the luckiest man and played a trick on Lester Thurow. Just when Reagan's mishmash of policies had brought the United States to the brink of collapse, as Thurow's book brilliantly demonstrates, the OPEC cartel fell apart. This fortuitous event is sparing the U.S. the inflationary consequences of the fall of the dollar, and is also allowing the Federal Reserve to ease monetary policy, which is bringing down interest rates and should ultimately reduce the federal deficit, thereby also reducing U.S. dependence on foreign capital. Suddenly, the international economy seems less unstable (at least for the time being, as long as Mexico can be saved from defaulting). All these welcome changes are saving Reagan's hide, and make Thurow's case for economic reform seem less compelling.

My second reservation is that by focusing on problems of *U.S.* competitiveness, Thurow does not give sufficient attention to global economic problems. Gordon, Weisskopf, and Bowles argued in *Beyond the Wasteland* that economic growth in the industrial countries has been stagnant for the last twenty years. If this is the case, proposals to increase U.S. competitiveness may be aimed at the wrong problem. By contrast, Robert Kuttner's *The Economic Illusion* argues that the industrialized world, including the U.S., may be suffering from the fact that hundreds of millions of poor workers in the Third World are entering the global labor market as cheap labor but are unable to purchase what they produce.

Third, I would argue that lagging productivity growth is a symptom of America's economic problems as well as a cause of them. Thurow's emphasis on reforming America's social institutions to increase productivity growth leads him to slight other causes of the recent slow growth of the American economy. Thurow does not ignore macroeconomic forces altogether: his analysis of the inflationary surge of the 1970s is thoughtful and illuminating. Nevertheless, on the whole, Thurow gives less attention than he might to such problems as excessive military spending, high interest rates, the strong dollar, the rise and fall of oil prices, and the distorting impact of the flood of "hot" Arab dollars into U.S. banks. If a Democratic administration cut military spending, drove down interest rates, kept the dollar down to realistic levels, and if oil prices remained low, many of the "institutional" problems Thurow describes would solve themselves.

In the last two years, as the Democratic party has sunk to ever-lower depths of cowardice and confusion, two writers with connections to party policy makers, Robert Kuttner and Lester Thurow, have provided a clear direction for reform. Is anybody listening? □

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LETTERS

Psychotherapy and Nazis

Editors:

Paul Roazen's review (*Dissent*, Spring 1986) of my book, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich*, suffers not only from an ignorance of what I wrote about psychotherapy in Nazi Germany but of what history as a discipline is about. "The worst book" Roazen has "read in ages" is not the book I wrote.

This ignorance stems from two sources. The first is a naive and idealistic definition of psychotherapy. Roazen sees psychotherapy only in the abstract, only as a sophisticated and compassionate means to human aid and comfort. But such a definition will not do; it is typical of a mindlessly partisan and Whiggish view of science and the professions that no longer passes muster among historians. First of all, psychotherapy, as I show in my book, was and is a composite of various ideas and ideals which in Germany among other things provided one of the bases for its inclusion in the Nazi system. Secondly, psychotherapy as an evolving profession was and is more than the selfless practice of a technique: it was and is an institutional, a social, and a political entity. Thus my thesis is *not* that psychotherapy in the pristine sense in which Roazen defines it "flourished" (a word I quite purposely omitted from the book) under Hilter, but is, as I state on page four, that "the history of psychotherapy in the Third Reich is not an inspirational tale of advances in sophisticated theory and the alleviation of mental suffering, but rather of a morally and intellectually ambiguous accommodation to the established powers of Nazi Germany, on both the individual and collective level, in pursuit of professional and institutional status. . . ."

The second source of Roazen's ignorance is his indulgence in necessary and laudatory outrage over Nazism. The problem is that he never goes beyond condemnation to examine critically the nature of Hitlerism in power and its place in German and Western history. Thus when he actually stumbles up against one of the major points of my thesis—i.e., that there is a continuity in the development of psychotherapy in Germany from the 1920s through the Third Reich and into the postwar period—he throws away any discussion of the importance of this fact by invoking "a collapse of Western civilization." I share Roazen's concern for the implications of the use of science by evil regimes (and vice-versa), but I wish to understand the historical particulars of this instance rather than to engage in wailing and gnashing of teeth.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this mutual exploitation in the case of psychotherapy in the Third Reich was the easy accommodation to the demands of the regime provided by the "neo-Freudian" trend toward adjustment and social conformity. (Russell Jacoby's *The Repression of Psychoanalysis* is the best recent work on this trend within psychoanalysis.) Roazen writes that we "should be wary of the implications of any system of ideas that aims to 'harmonize' the individual and the dominant social order," but fails to mention that my book documents how this very trend was aggravated by the "medicalization" of psychotherapy as well as by the professional opportunism of its practitioners.

I share Roazen's disgust for the Nazis, but as a historian I cannot simply plaster the label "Nazi" on everything associated with their regime. Even in Nazi Germany there were areas of gray where easy condemnations do not suffice. There were even instances of humanity among psychotherapists and it is at least arguable that with the evil of collaboration with the Nazis there came also some immediate and long-term good through the preservation of psychotherapeutic practice in Germany. Indeed, to insist, as Roazen does, that no psychotherapy worthy of the name existed under the Nazis is to engage in precisely that denial which has allowed German psychotherapists and psychoanalysts until recently to repress any historical connection between their professions and the Third Reich. The importance of the history of psychotherapy in the Third Reich is that it reveals deep ambiguities and ironies. To understand such things is not to condone them. Such attempts at understanding can only aid us in unmasking the problematical in the human experience so as to help chart the way for improvement. So wake up, Dr. Roazen. You can't be alert to what is important with your head in your hands. We require acuity, not despair.

Geoffrey Cocks
Albion College, Mich. □

China

Editors:

When I came upon Simon Leys's review of my *The Long March: The Untold Story* in the Spring *Dissent* I plunged into it with avidity. I am a devotee of Leys's elegant prose style if not always of his excitable opinions.

I had not read very far when I was overcome by a feeling of déjà vu. Surely, I had read these words before. After some digging I found that my hunch was correct. Simon Leys's "Maoist History, Maoist Myth" of *Dissent* had appeared as Pierre Ryckmans's "Great Myths and Mao's Long March" in Rupert Murdoch's newspaper, *The Australian* of Sydney.

No harm, I suppose, in marketing the same piece of prose twice, especially in markets so far separated as Sydney and New York; no harm in using different names. After all, Leys is a stylish pen name and Ryckmans is the more pedestrian name under which its

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possessor teaches at the Australian National University. Odd, perhaps, but certainly harmless.

And the two reviews are substantially the same. *Dissent* published about 360 words more than *The Australian* but it seems obvious that *The Australian* cut most of them for space reasons. Their deletion slightly reduces the negative slant but the loss is slight. *The Australian* could not find space for Mr. Leys's fine but aged story of the pigs and truffles but *The Australian's* readers perhaps don't go in much for truffles.

The *Dissent* version does repeat what might be described as an inadvertence by Mr. Leys. As I pointed out in a letter to *The Australian*, the 50th anniversary of the Long March was not, as Dr. Ryckmans (Mr. Leys) averred, "celebrated with such pomp" in China last year. Thus my account could not, as he suggested, "match so closely the tone of these celebrations." As I understand it, the 50th anniversary fête is to be held this coming autumn, not last (as I would have expected). Thus it may take a tone from *my* research and *my* conclusions. We shall have to wait and see.

Both Mr. Leys and Dr. Ryckmans insert what seem in Australia to be obligatory references to Wilfred Burchett. Not having studied the "remarkable essay"' to which reference is made I shall withhold comment.

I subscribe of course to the Ryckmans-Leys capsule version of the Long March as a "Long Rout" and a "Protracted Disaster." In fact I went to rather incredible pains to make this point. Incidentally no Chinese scholar whom I have consulted translates Chang Zheng as "the Long Expedition of Conquest." They all say it means the Long March. Period.

HARRISON E. SALISBURY
Taconic, Conn.

SIMON LEYS Replies:

1. Double publication:

As a modest token of friendship, I gave *Dissent* the right to reprint in the U.S. a book review that I had written for an Australian newspaper. I have often done this in the past, and I intend to do it again in the future—at least as long as the editors of *Dissent* consider that my pieces are worth printing. I fail to see why this practice should provoke the surprise and indignation of poor Salisbury. Perhaps no magazine ever expressed the wish to reproduce any of his own writings?

2. Were there any celebrations in China last year of the 50th anniversary of the Long March?

Before making any pronouncements on this subject, Mr. Salisbury should do his elementary homework. I suggest that he consult, for instance, *China News Analysis*, No. 1298, December 1, 1985, pp. 1-2, where he will find a series of references concerning these celebrations, as reported during the year (1985) in the Chinese press. (At the *New York Times* don't they ever teach journalists to do *some* research before making sweeping statements?)

3. Chang zheng:

Any historian will indeed rightly say that it should be translated as "Long March," as this has become a conventional, universally accepted term. Yet, any lexicographer (or any dictionary, for that matter) will tell that *zheng* has two basic connotations: 1) "expedition," as in *yuan zheng* for instance; 2) "to conquer," "to subjugate," as in *zheng fu* for instance. (At the *New York Times* don't they demand that journalists check their information before taking up their pens?)

4. The Burchett connection:

Mr. Salisbury, who displayed such an acute sensitivity in reaction to some minor aspects of my article, repeatedly declined to discuss the far more serious issue which I raised in my reference to R. Manne's essay. Allegedly, he never even bothered to read the latter. This uncharacteristic indifference puzzles me. When he finally finds the time to study Manne's statements, it will be most interesting to hear his comments. □

Benny Goodman

Editors:

When Benny Goodman died on June 13th, I felt as though I had lost someone in my own family. You had to be in high school in the Chicago area in the late 1930s, as I was, to appreciate him, not as the King of Swing, but as a man. Years later when I learned about his role as the first white musician to integrate the big bands, I was bowled over. Prejudice and Chicago were synonyms.

I was taught that the way you value a person is not by their looks or by money and success but by his or her personal integrity. Benny Goodman met that test.

PATRICIA ROBINSON
New York, N.Y.□

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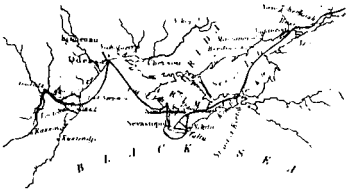

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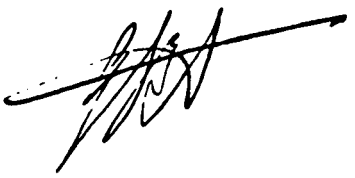

Edited by Samuel A. Weiss. Wise, brilliant, and characteristically Shavian, the letters of Bernard Shaw to his German translator, Siegfried Trebitsch, span almost half a century of collaboration and friendship—from 1902, when Shaw was in his dazzling prime, to 1950, shortly before Shaw's death at 94. The 531 letters (nearly all previously unpublished) deal not only with Shaw's introduction to Central Europe and his subsequent rise to Continental fame, but with the cataclysmic events of the century: World War I, the collapse of Central Europe, the rise of Nazism, the forced migration of German Jews, and World War II and its aftermath. An irrepressible teacher and a loyal friend, Shaw instructs his disciple on managers, publishers, and pirates; on translation, contracts, and copyright; on the political and social upheavals of the time; on the cinema; on health, diet, and personal finances; on coping with exile and old age; and many lesser matters. The letters are annotated and accompanied by introductions that place them in biographical, historical, and theatrical contexts. Illus. $45.00

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